ENTERTAINMENT / F1

Laura Hermosa: Woman with a hundred voices

BUSINESS / B1

RP faces severe water crisis by 2010, DENR study warns

SPORTS / A32

Federer unbeatable, wins Australian Open without dropping a set

WORLD / A28

John Paul II escaped from Vatican 100 times to go skiing, says aide

Gov't response to killings 'most unsatisfactory'

By Leila B. Salaverria

IN THE MOST SCATHING ATTACK YET ON POLITICAL violence they blamed on both leftist and rightist groups, the country's Catholic bishops yesterday slammed as inadequate and insincere the handling by the Arroyo administration of the surge in killings of militant activists.

"The government and the military's response to

GOV'T/A13

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, January 29, 2007 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 52 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

5,000 Filipino maids march in Hong Kong

By Blanche S. Rivera
Contributor

HONG KONG—IN THE BIGGEST SHOW OF FORCE since the wage cut protests in 2001, some 5,000 Filipino domestic helpers marched in the streets of Hong Kong yesterday to protest the Philippine government's new pre-qualification requirements for household service workers.

5,000 FILIPINO/ A23

Bishops go all out to ensure fair polls

CBCP: May balloting referendum on GMA

By Leila B. Salaverria

SAYING THE COUNTRY cannot afford another election tainted by allegations of fraud and violence, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines is mobilizing its resources to ensure that the synchronized national and local elections in May are credible and orderly.

The CBCP refused to lay to rest the "Hello Garci" election scandal that marred the 2004 presidential election, saying the problems it caused continue to be felt.

"These coming elections in May 2007 are especially important. Many of our current political problems, which have hindered fuller economic development and social justice, especially for the poor, can be traced to unresolved questions concerning the conduct of past elections," CBCP president Angel Lagdameo said in the pastoral letter.

"As a nation, we cannot afford yet another controversial electoral exercise that further aggravates social distrust and hopelessness," Lagdameo said.

CBCP vice president Antonio Ledesma acknowledged that the "Hello Garci" scandal was among the unresolved questions about the 2004 elections.

The scandal involved the wiretapping of the President's conversations with an unnamed election

BISHOPS/A12

A TASTE OF 'DINAGYANG'
Tribal performers jump in the air at the Freedom Grandstand in Iloilo City in celebration of the "Dinagyang" Festival. About 20 tribes joined the yearly festival's street competition.
ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Disunited opposition cause for nat'l concern

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

TWO DEVELOPMENTS BODE ill for the so-called united opposition just a few weeks before the start of the campaign for the midterm May elections.

The first development is the resignation of former Senators Vicente Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta from the LDP (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino) and the resignation of Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile as chair of the PMP (Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino).

The second is the departure of former Sen. Francisco Tatad from the United Opposition (UNO) with a scathing attack on the lack of criteria for the selection of its senatorial candidates, especially those involving dynastic kin of prominent opposition leaders.

These defections came at the worst moment for the opposition as the off-year elections offer an opportunity to wrest control of Congress, especially the House of Representatives, from the iron grip of President Macapagal-Arroyo's majority coalition.

They represent cracks on the façade of the opposition as it faces a well-financed administration coalition machine at the grass roots.

DISUNITED / A8

GMA hopes economic growth will stop exodus

FROM A TOURISM PUSH TO power reform, President Macapagal-Arroyo plans to keep pumping up the economy enough that Filipinos will stay at home rather than have to leave for abroad to work.

In an interview with Reuters on Saturday in Davos, Switzerland, Ms Arroyo said she expected the Philippine economy to grow about 6 percent this year, up from an expected rate of 5.5 percent in 2006 and 5.0 percent in 2005.

"This is the longest period of consistent growth that we've had for a long time in the Philippines. There's no boom and bust cycle," she said on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum. *(See related story in Business, Page B1.)*

"I hope the economy will grow and we'll have enough jobs at home so that our great Filipino workers will not have to go abroad to find a job. A job abroad should be a career option, not the only choice for a hard-working Filipino," she said.

The President arrived yesterday afternoon in Manila after attending the WEF.

Ms Arroyo appeared to be in a good mood the moment she stepped out of Philippine Airlines (PAL) flight PR 001, which arrived at 4:15 p.m.

The President, who arrived without First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, was given full military honors at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

The highlight of her successful Davos trip was a call from US President George W. Bush who praised her for her "fantastic" leadership in the war against terror.

Despite the long-haul flight, Ms Arroyo smiled and chatted with Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita as they walked down the red carpet.

Since Ms Arroyo took over the presidency in 2001, she has

GMA HOPES/ A8

Ice melt means global warming report all wet

WASHINGTON—LATER THIS week in Paris, the world's top climate scientists will issue a dire forecast for the planet that warns of slowly rising sea levels and higher temperatures.

But that may be the sugarcoated version.

Early and changeable drafts of the upcoming authoritative report on climate change foresee smaller sea level rises than were projected in 2001 in the last report. Many top US scientists reject these rosier numbers.

Those calculations don't include the recent, and dramatic, melt-off of big ice sheets in two crucial locations.

They "don't take into account the gorillas—Greenland and Antarctica," said Lonnie Thompson, a polar ice specialist and Ohio State University earth sciences professor.

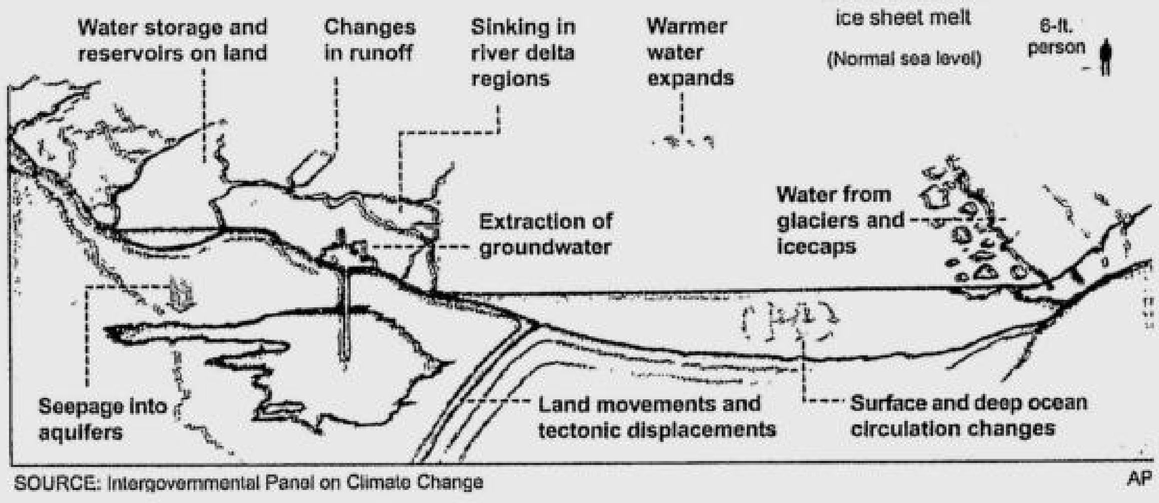
"I think there are unpleasant surprises as we move into the 21st century," Thompson said.

Michael MacCracken, who until 2001 coordinated the official US government reviews of the international climate report on global warming, has fired off a

ICE MELT/ A23

Melting ice, global warming cause debate

Climate scientists are expected to release this week a dire forecast for the planet warning of rising sea levels and higher temperatures.



Global reasons for changing sea levels
Water storage and reservoirs on land
Changes in runoff
Sinking in river delta regions
Warmer water expands
Extraction of groundwater
Water from glaciers and icecaps
Seepage into aquifers
Land movements and tectonic displacements
Surface and deep ocean circulation changes
Rise in sea level worldwide after total ice sheet melt
Greenland ice melt
19.7-23 ft.
16.4-19.7
West Antarctic ice sheet melt
(Normal sea level)
6-ft. person

SOURCE: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

AP

GONZALEZ: Evidence against Boratong weak.

Pasig shabu busters assail memo of Gonzalez

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Contributor

NO LESS THAN JUSTICE SECRETARY Raul Gonzalez thinks the evidence against Amin Imam Boratong, the alleged operator of the shabu flea market busted in Pasig City, does not stand a chance in court.

This was reflected in three separate memoranda that Gonzalez issued on Nov. 30, 2006; Dec. 27, 2006, and, most recently, on Jan. 23, 2007.

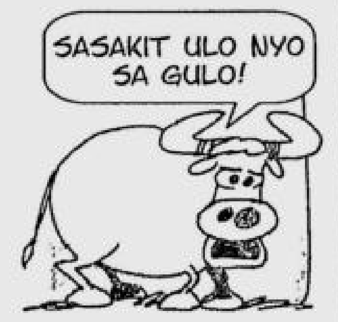
"If we look at this case dispassionately, Boratong was not caught in the shabu *tiangge* and the only evidence against him was the PhilHealth card found in the compound that bore his name," he told this reporter.

Gonzalez's actions on the case had raised protests among some of those involved in the investigation, who claimed they had a case against Boratong.

What did the Nov. 30 memo say?

Addressed to Senior State Prosecutor Archimedes Manapat, Gonzalez said: "Considering that there is a petition for review filed by the accused in the above-captioned case (People v Amin Boratong) before this department and in order not to render moot and academic whatever action this

PASIG/ A12



SASAKIT ULO NYO SA GULO!

Who's admin, who's opposition? So confusing

By Michael Lim Ubac and Christine O. Avendaño

THE BATTLE LINES FOR the senatorial race are getting more blurred with each passing day.

At the rate the administration is trying to pirate opposition candidates and the speed by which some op-

WHO'S/ A10

EZ2	Mid-Day	SUERTRES	Evening
21 23	7 6 7	9 1 0	

(All in exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

3 15 24 37 41 47

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Second FrontPage

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Eastern Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Visayas will be cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/27/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Law urged on people's 'right to know'

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

A FORMER GOVERNMENT UNDERSECRETARY revealed that during her tenure she often leaked information inaccessible to the media in order to better inform the public.

A professor and former government consultant experienced in the ways of government bureaucracy pushed for more transparency in governance.

A civil society advocate discussed the salient features of the "Freedom of Information Bill" and the urgency of its signing into law.

These are some of the members of the civil society groups and concerned individuals who gathered at a forum last Friday in order to push for the speedy passage of a law on freedom of information that would strengthen the citizens' right to know guaranteed in the Constitution.

The Economic Policy Reforms and Advocacy (Epra) and the Action for Economic Reforms (AER) are spearheading efforts to call the attention of both houses of Congress to hasten the passage of the bill. They are also calling on other civil society groups, media organizations and individual right-to-information advocates to band together and sign a manifesto.

A forum speaker, former Undersecretary of Finance Milwida Guevara, now with Synergeia Foundation, revealed that she often leaked information that was otherwise inaccessible to the media so that the public would be better informed. People in the know in her department assumed she had leaked the information to the media, Guevara said, without regret. She spoke on issues of transparency in relation to fiscal management.

University of the Philippines Prof. J. Prospero de Vera III quoted Thomas Jefferson who said, "Information is the currency of democracy." Arguing for transparency, De Vera said the heart of any democracy was active participation by the people in government decisions that touch their lives. "The 'soul' of such a system," he added, "is the ability of ordinary citizens to hold government officials accountable for their actions."

Transparency, he further added, allowed citizens to look openly into the actions of their government rather than permitting these to be cloaked in secrecy.

Right to information

The current version of the bill known as the "Freedom of Access to Information Act of 2006" being pushed by civil society groups is a collation and substitution of five bills and sponsored by nine representatives, among them, Loretta Ann Rosales. Its working title is "Implementing the right of access to information on matters of public concern guaranteed under Section 7, Article III of the 1987 Constitution and for other purposes."

Nepomuceno Malaluan of AER discussed the proposed bill which, if passed into law, would remove ambiguities and, instead, strengthen guarantees.

Section 7 of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution guarantees that: "The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law."

But supporters of the bill lamented that while the Supreme Court has consistently upheld this right and compelled the disclosure of withheld information in cases brought before the high court, the denial of access to information on matters of public concern remained widespread.

Mayuga report

One example was the Mayuga report which cleared now Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and other senior generals of involvement in irregularities during the 2004 presidential election.

Navy chief Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga, head of the five-member fact-finding commission, has yet to release in full the report.

It is not only the media and institutions that should be able to invoke freedom of access to information. Ordinary individuals should be able to invoke it to check on public contracts and projects, gather facts, figures and other information that concern them.

More teeth

The new law is expected to address problems such as:

- The absence of a uniform, simple and speedy access procedure
- The discretionary manner in giving access to information
- The untested and insufficient basis for sanctions in cases of violations of the right to information
- The ambiguity in the scope of guarantees to access
- Compelling disclosure of information, primarily judicial, which remains inaccessible to the public
- In the context of increasing private sector participation in the delivery of public goods and services, information that are of public concern are controlled by the private sector, which is outside of the constitutional guarantee.

The proposed law is expected to give "operational teeth" to the constitutional guarantees and help combat corruption. It will not only compel disclosure, it will also provide penalties for those who deny access to information. It does not intend to infringe on the right to privacy of private individuals.

Palace steps in to cool down clashes with MILF

By Christine O. Avendaño *in Manila* **and Jeoffrey Maitem** *in Mindanao*

MALACAÑANG MOVED IN TO stop the fighting between Army soldiers and the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Midsayap, North Cotabato, so as not to jeopardize ongoing peace negotiations.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process Jesus Dureza described the Midsayap clashes that left at least six dead over the past four days as "an unfortunate incident" and reported that the Joint Ceasefire Committee of the government and the MILF was now on top of the situation.

"I ordered our troops and the ceasefire committee headed by Brig. Gen. Eduardo Guerra to ensure there will be no more firing of guns. We will investigate how it started," Dureza told INQUIRER Mindanao in a phone interview.

Dureza said he had also dispatched a team from his office and asked the Department of Social Welfare and Development to assist some 500 displaced families or about 2,000 people (not 5,000 as earlier reported) who had fled the four villages in the conflict zone. The evacuees are now crowding the main highway.

"It's still a touch-and-go situation, but the ceasefire committee is meeting to end the clashes and prevent the breakdown of the peace talks," said Dureza in another interview at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City, shortly before the arrival of President Macapagal-Arroyo from Davos, Switzerland, where she attended the World Economic Forum.

Put to the test

"Our ceasefire mechanism is being put to the test," added Dureza, just days after Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo told a high-powered international audience in Davos that he was confident that a formal peace agreement with the MILF would happen by June, thereby ending over three decades of a secessionist war in the southern Philippines and the opening of rural Mindanao to economic growth and investments.

On the ground, Guerra said the fighting involving soldiers and MILF rebels under Commander Yuri Sugod in Barangays Rangaban and Mudsing was stopped due to the immediate intervention of the Malaysian peace monitors.

"So far, we have not received reports regarding civilian casualties," he told the INQUIRER.

On the other hand, Von al Haq, MILF's ceasefire committee chair, said that aside from a resident of Barangay Rangaban who was killed during the aerial bombing by the military, another child was killed.

Al Haq said the MILF will hold an emergency meeting with its counterpart (in the government) to discuss the problem.

Both sides accused each other of violating the ceasefire signed in Kuala Lumpur in July 2003.

Army spokesperson Lt. Col Julieto Ando said on Friday the fighting began when MILF men conducted rice raids on some villages, then attacked soldiers who came to protect the people. The 6th Infantry Battalion also called in assault planes to back up their positions.

Rebs blame government

But MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu denied the MILF started the fighting, and accused government forces of touching off the conflict by encroaching on villages occupied by rebel units and their families. He said the conflict was sparked by a land conflict between progovernment militiamen and an MILF group.

MILF chief negotiator Mohager Iqbal said they will file a formal complaint with the joint ceasefire monitoring committee and the Malaysian-led international monitoring team.

The peace talks between the government and the MILF began in 2001 and led to a ceasefire in 2003. Malaysia, a member of the influential Organization of the Islamic Conference, has been brokering and hosting the peace talks. It has also sent observers to check the status of the truce on the ground.

Negotiations hit a snag in September last year as both parties failed to agree on the issue of ancestral domain.

The MILF wants at least 1,000 villages included in their proposed Moro homeland, but the government only agrees to 600 villages, and only after the move is approved in a plebiscite. *With an AFP report*

Military: MNLF helping us against MILF

THE MILITARY HAS CONFIRMED THAT THE Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) is helping government forces hunt down the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Sulu province.

Brig. Gen. Ruben Rafael, Task Force Comet commander, told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo last week that the military had conducted operations against the ASG in October and November of last year together with the MNLF faction loyal to former chair Nur Misuari.

"The MNLF there are helping the Armed Forces. We talk to them. They helped us last year and even now they are helping us in operations in the eastern side of Sulu," Rafael said.

He said that he himself was able to enter areas controlled by the MNLF Misuari group in Sulu province.

He added that he had designated his deputy commander to be the liaison officer between his unit and the MILF fighters.

"They give us information and they are with us in conducting operations," Rafael said.

However, the collaboration had not yet seen any results.

"There is nothing positive yet. There have been clashes. But you know the strategy of the Abu Sayyaf is not to engage [the enemy]. They will not engage if there are many of us," Rafael said.

Task Force Comet is a military unit formed exclusively to go after the ASG in Sulu. It is composed of different military units from all service commands.

Armed Forces of the Philippine Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said that with the death of ASG leaders Khadaffy Janjalani and Abu Sulaiman, the "final battles" against the ASG are "at hand."

But Rafael also recently told media that the remaining battles would not be easy since the ASG had broken up into smaller groups.

Military spokesperson Col. Bartolome Bacarro said the military was bracing for retaliatory attacks from the ASG with the death of Janjalani and Sulaiman. *Alcuin Papa*

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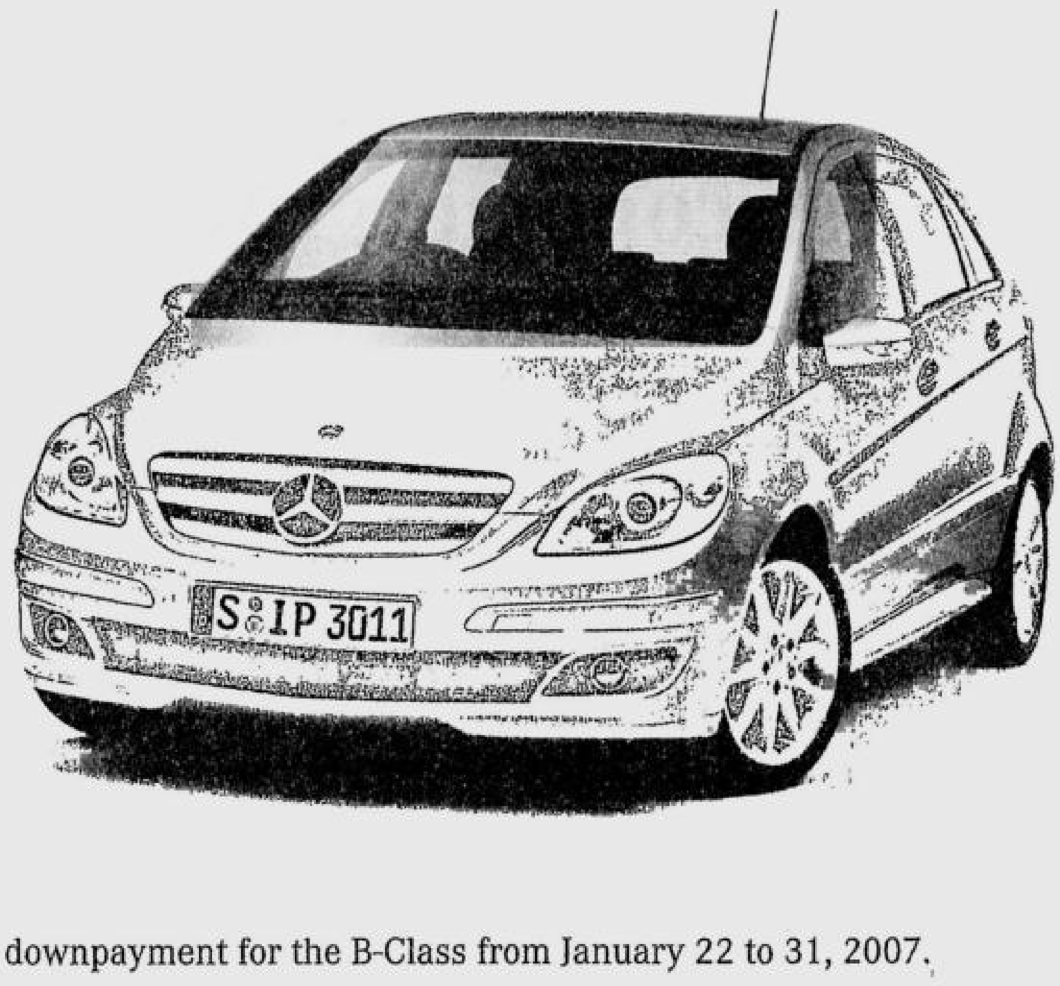

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0207 Series of 2007

Wage board fears investors might leave

THE WAGE BOARD IN THE CALABARZON region (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) has joined those against the proposed P125 daily across-the-board wage increase, warning this could lead to the exodus of investors from its industrial parks and economic zones.

Regional Wage Board 4A called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to veto the P125 wage hike should Congress pass it, to prevent economic and livelihood problems the salary hike would create.

Labor Secretary Arturo Brion earlier issued a statement, saying it was the wage boards that would determine how much the increase should be.

In a resolution signed by its labor and employer representatives, the Calabarzon wage board said there was no reason to adjust the minimum wage, more so the salaries of private workers who were already earning more than the minimum amount.

According to the wage board, it had conducted a study that showed that the wage increase pushed by the House would weaken the region's competitiveness in retaining investors in its 25 economic zones and industrial parks.

"HB 345 will discourage the further inflow of foreign investments which is considered the main source of employment and economic activity in the region," the board said in a statement.

It also said in its resolution that the legislated wage increase would grossly affect the operation of small establishments that might find it difficult to comply with the wage order. *Leila B. Salaverria*

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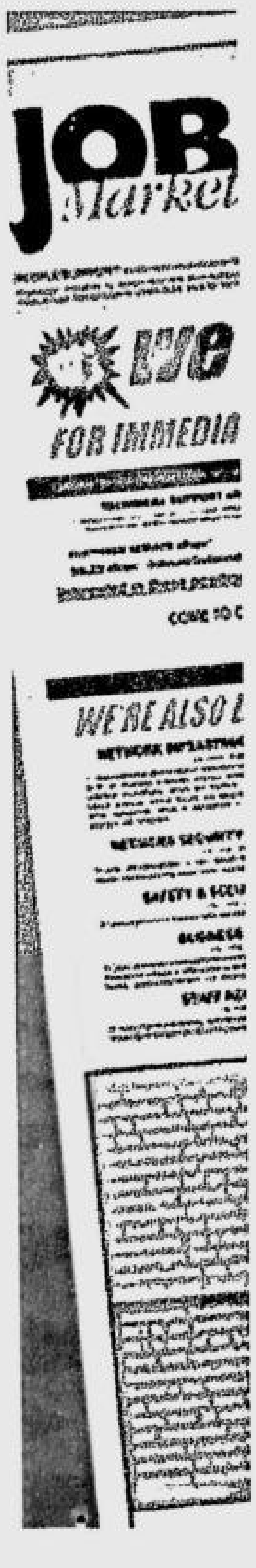

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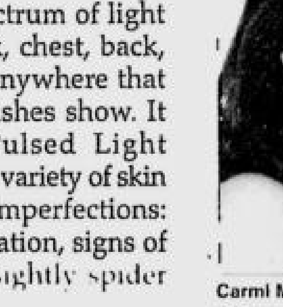
IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment helps banish freckles, dark spots and spider veins without a trace. Restaurateur Cristina Gonzalez-Romualdez is one satisfied client. She relates, "Some skin problems I had were freckles and a bit of melasma. IPL gave me a more even complexion. My skin is fair that's why I easily get freckles. IPL helped remove the freckles and the melasma."



Cristina Romualdez

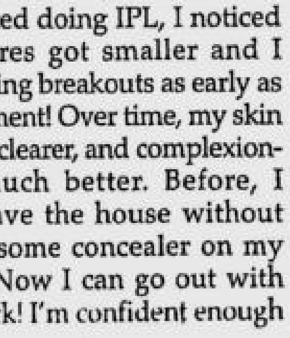
IPL is a non-invasive treatment that uses a broad spectrum of light to treat the face, neck, chest, back, hands and virtually anywhere that sun damage or blemishes show. It uses the Intense Pulsed Light technology to correct a variety of skin conditions and skin imperfections: freckles, skin discoloration, signs of aging, age spots, unsightly spider veins, broken capillaries, rosacea and other blemishes.

Cristina happily recalls her IPL experience; " I remember after the 3rd or 4th session, there was a big improvement. But even after the 1st session I could already see an effect because my pores tightened. Somebody told me my skin was glowing...and this was right after an IPL treatment! The best thing about it is there's no downtime. Since I like going to the beach and out of town, I'm always exposed to the sun. That's why I go for IPL treatments after an outing. I'm really happy with it!"

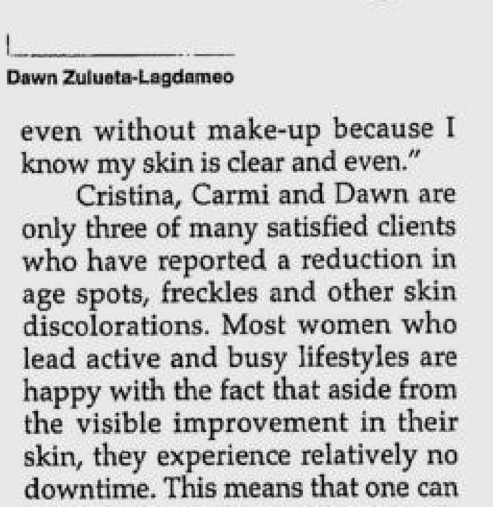
Another fan of IPL is actress/interior design consultant Carmi Martin. She happily relates: "I used to have an uneven skin tone because of pigmentation and freckles. After IPL, my skin tone became even! In the past I'd always have to wear make-up because I was afraid to let people see me without it. Now, since I love going to Boracay, I can enjoy the sun and sea make-up free!"

Carmi Martin

To restore an overall youthful look, IPL simultaneously treats a wide variety of skin concerns safely and effectively. The result: younger-looking skin and a clearer, even complexion.



Actress Dawn Zulueta-Lagdameo is all praises for this blemish eraser as well. "Since my skin is oily my problem has always been the eruption of acne," she reveals. When I started doing IPL, I noticed that my pores got smaller and I stopped getting breakouts as early as the 3rd treatment! Over time, my skin was looking clearer, and complexion-wise, so much better. Before, I couldn't leave the house without putting on some concealer on my blemishes. Now I can go out with only sunblock! I'm confident enough even without make-up because I know my skin is clear and even."



Dawn Zulueta-Lagdameo

Cristina, Carmi and Dawn are only three of many satisfied clients who have reported a reduction in age spots, freckles and other skin discolorations. Most women who lead active and busy lifestyles are happy with the fact that aside from the visible improvement in their skin, they experience relatively no downtime. This means that one can actually have fairer, even-toned, glowing skin after approximately 30 minutes of treatment, and can go to work on the same day.

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Tribal tillers fear being in military's enemies list

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—AT LEAST 20 FARMERS FROM Barangay Casoon in Monkayo town, Compostela Valley, fled their homes after government troopers, accompanied by armed civilians, raided several homes in their village.

The farmers, all belonging to the Calinugan Tribal Cooperative, feared for their lives and were seeking the intervention of human rights groups and the Commission on Human Rights.

Crispin Tompong, chair of the cooperative, said they believed they were in the military's "order of battle" and urged an immediate investigation of their plight. An order of battle, which lists the names of the military's enemies, is much feared in conflict-ridden areas.

The military raids were apparently in retaliation for the series of attacks on army patrols by New People's Army rebels in another town.

"Had all of us stayed, we could have been killed," Tompong said, referring to the Jan. 19 raid on his house allegedly by members of the military's 28th Infantry Battalion and a group of armed lumad (indigenous peoples).

The house of another villager, Queros Sagubay, was also raided by the troopers and militia men belonging to the Dibabawon tribe and led by Jessie "Yatot" Okbong.

"When they (military and lumad militia) raided our houses, they were looking for us and for some documents which we don't have. Because they did not find us, they left the village but warned that should they be ambushed by the NPA along the way, they will get back at us by strafing our houses and having all of us killed," Tompong said.

But Lt. Col. Bein Datuin, commander of the 28th IB, denied they had in their order of battle the names of the tribal cooperative leaders, although he admitted that Casoon was considered a New People's Army-influenced area.

He also denied the raid on the village but admitted that some residents were "invited for questioning" at the military base in Monkayo because of a series of attacks by the NPA on their patrol base in the nearby village of San Isidro.

However, Sagubay said they could be the targets of retribution and intrigue. He said Okbong, who was helping the military, may be harboring personal grudges against them because he lost in a land dispute settled by the tribal elders.

The human rights group Karapatan has condemned the military for arming civilian lumad in their fight against the communist insurgency.

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Navy holding 30 missing in Sulu, says witness

ZAMBOANGA CITY—AT LEAST 30 PEOPLE have been reported missing since Thursday afternoon on the high seas of Luuk town in Sulu.

Maj. Eugene Batara, Western Mindanao Command spokesperson, said the 2nd Marine Brigade received a report from Kalingalang Caluang Councilor Hadji Jailani that at least 30 persons, all residents of Barangay Pitogo in Luuk, went missing at around 1:45 p.m. on Thursday.

They were in two motorized bancas.

"All units have been alerted in the area. Local efforts to locate [them proved] futile, prompting them to request the government for assistance," Batara said.

Jose Manuel Mamauag, Commission on Human Rights (CHR) director for Western Mindanao, said they had started their own investigation.

"We were informed those missing persons were allegedly abducted by Philippine Navy personnel," Mamauag said.

He said the report had come from a civil society group that monitors human rights abuses in Mindanao.

Jolo Councilor Temojen Tulawie said relatives of the missing persons had sought the help of the authorities to search for the victims.

Tulawie said the 28 adults and four children were in two pump boats, one of them named the Sweet Rose.

Tulawie said fisherman Julhali Labuani, 45, claimed seeing a Navy gunboat with vessel number 419 arrest those on board the two pump boats.

Labuani reported what happened to the relatives of the victims.

"I am aware of the consequences of my testimony. I am willing to die," Tulawie quoted Labuani as saying.

Abdulraki Ismael, 28, appealed to the Navy, if it had them, to release the victims, including his wife Muhilma and their two children Marlyn, 4, and Alfari, 2.

"What has my wife or my family done to the military for them to be apprehended?" Ismael said.

Wahid Ibrahim, 40, said his children Nuriya, 15, and Adzmir, 13, were also on the boats.

"They were on their way to attend a wedding party in Tongkil, but they didn't reach Tongkil," Ibrahim said.

Commodore Geronimo Defensor, chief of Naval Forces Western Mindanao, denied the Navy was involved.

"Our units there didn't apprehend or arrest any civilians in that area. Actually we just received the report this Sunday morning," Defensor said.

"Besides, we don't have a Navy gunboat with number 419," he said.

He said the Navy was conducting its own search operation for the missing persons.

Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

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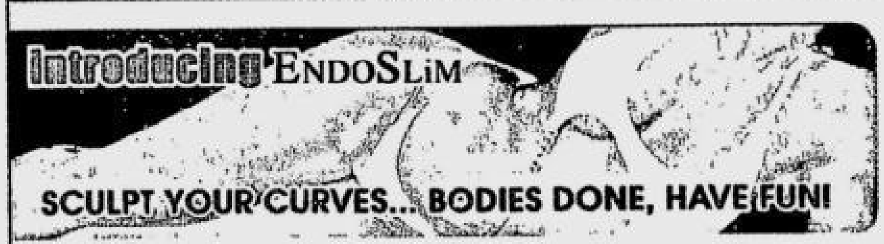

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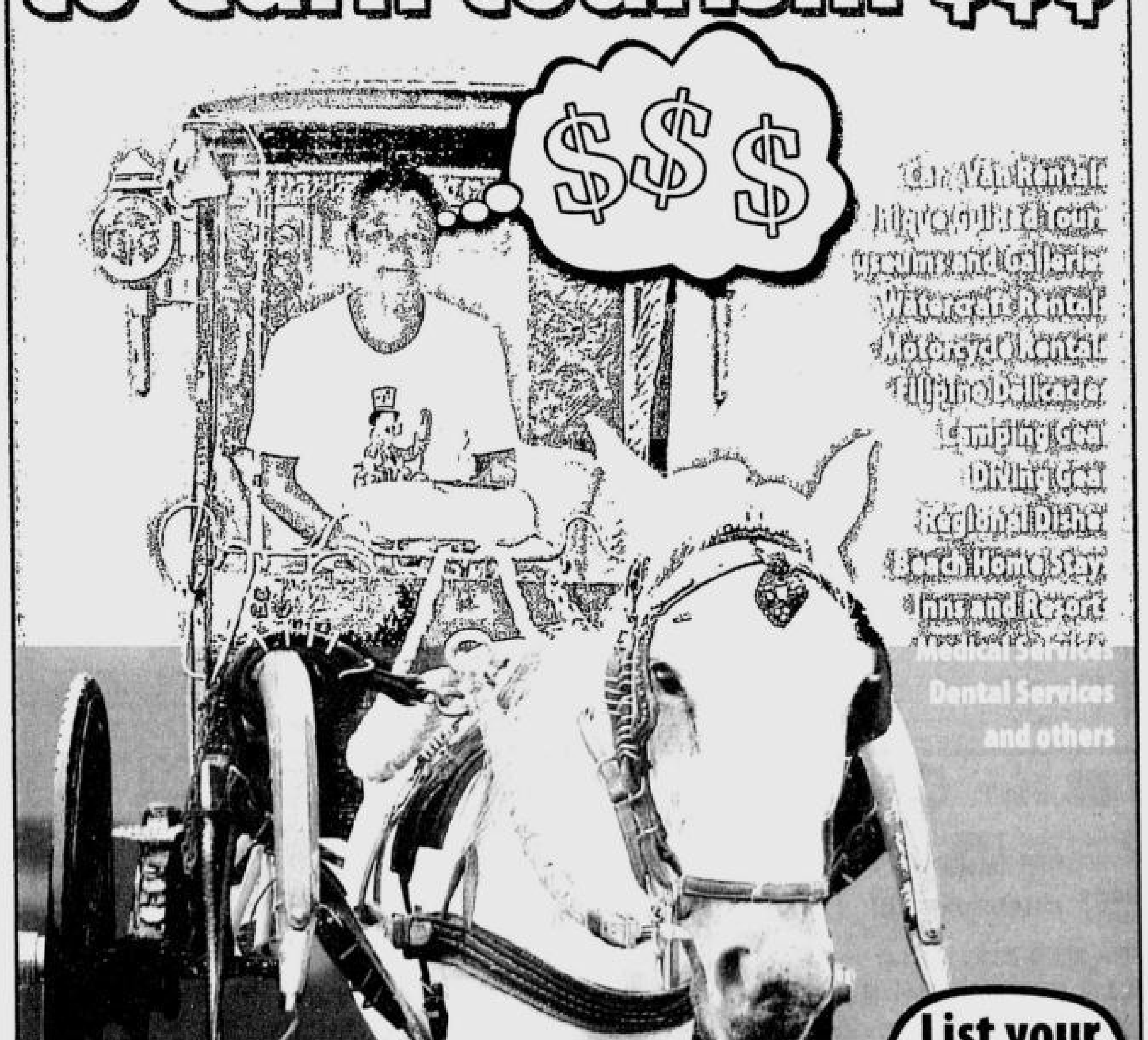

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NSA: More witnesses to link Joma to killings

By Alcuin Papa

MORE WITNESSES ARE SET TO surface to tie Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Ma. (Joma) Sison to the killings of former rebel cadres and civilians, according to National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales in a statement the other day.

Gonzales said "important progress" has been made in investigations linking Sison to the killing of former Cagayan Rep. Rodolfo Aguinaldo and former rebel commanders Arturo Tabara and Romulo Kintanar.

But Fidel Agcaoili, chair of the National Democratic Front (NDF) human rights committee, said Gonzales was "clearly telling a lie "by accusing Sison of the murders.

Agcaoili said it was "impossible" for Sison to be part of any plan to murder Aguinaldo, Tabara and Kintanar "by virtue of his long absence" from the country.

But Gonzales said new warrants had been issued for the arrest of Sison and other leaders of the communist movement when they set foot in the country.

"Investigations (into the deaths of Aguinaldo, Tabara, Kintanar and others) have reached their final stages and more arrest warrants are forthcoming," Gonzales said.

In the case of Aguinaldo, Gonzales said "new witnesses" had submitted sworn statements saying Sison had ordered the killing of the late governor of Cagayan.

Revival of the case

The Tuguegarao Regional Trial Court had ordered the revival of the case and issued new warrants of arrest for Sison and the entire Regional Party Committee in Cagayan Valley.

"Likewise, the investigation of the murder of former rebel commanders Arturo Tabara and Romulo Kintanar also pointed to Sison and the top leadership of the CPP-NPA-NDF as principal accused. The charges are currently filed with the Department of Justice," Gonzales said.

"The statement and material pieces of evidence provided by these witnesses will prove the culpability of the communist leadership who continue to murder uncooperative individuals up to this day," Gonzales added.

In a statement, Agcaoili countered: "Gonzales uses the false accusation against Sison to make an even more malicious psywar spin that the deaths of Aguinaldo, Kintanar and Tabara prove that there is a purge in the CPP and that the CPP and NPA are responsible for the more than 820 victims of extrajudicial killing, which have been perpetrated under Oplan Bantay Laya of the Arroyo regime from 2001 to the present."

He said that Gonzales and his "military and police underlings" had a track record of putting up so-called witnesses who had given false testimonies.

Mendacious statements

"The psywar statements of Norberto Gonzales and his military and police underlings are actually stupid and are easily exposed as mendacious by the slightest investigation. But they are accorded the privilege of power in the major channels of information. Worst of all, they are used to justify the bloody campaigns of suppression in the rural areas and the extrajudicial killing and abduction of progressive legal activists under Oplan Bantay Laya I and II."

The CPP-NPA has been marked as a terrorist group by the United States and the European Union.

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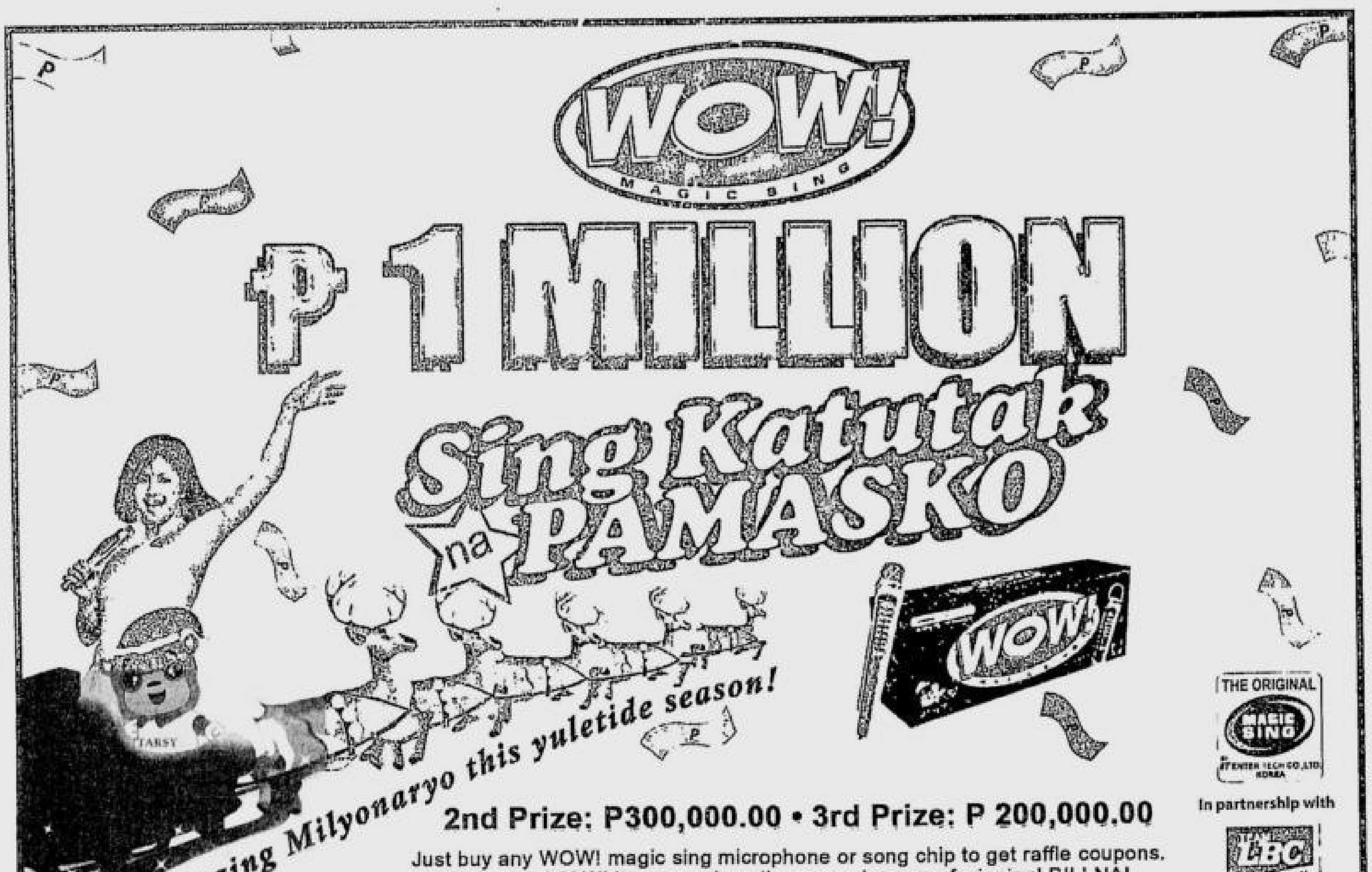
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1st Reading: Heb 11:32-40
Gospel: Mark 5:1-20

Jesus and his disciples arrived on the other side of the lake in the region of the Gerasenes. No sooner did Jesus leave the boat than he was met by a man with evil spirits who had come from the tombs. He lived among the tombs and no one could restrain him, even with a chain. He had often been bound with fetters and chains but he would pull the chains apart and smash the fetters, and no one had the strength to control him. Night and day he stayed among the tombs on the hillsides, and was continually screaming and beating himself with stones.

When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell at his feet and cried with a loud voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, son of the Most High God? For God's sake I beg you, do not torment me." He said this because Jesus had commanded, "Come out of the man, evil spirit." And when Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" he replied, "Legion is my name, for we are many." And all of them kept begging Jesus not to send them out of that region.

Now, a great herd of pigs was feeding on the hillside, and the evil spirits begged him, "Send us to the pigs and let us go into them." So Jesus let them go. The evil spirits came out of the man and went into the pigs, and immediately the herd rushed down the cliff and all were drowned in the lake. The herdsmen fled and reported this in the town and in the countryside, so all the people came to see what had happened.

They came to Jesus and saw the man freed of the evil spirits sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the same man who had been possessed by the legion. They were afraid. And when those who had seen it told what had happened to the man and to the pigs, the people begged Jesus to leave their neighborhood.

When Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed begged to stay with him. Jesus would not let him and said, "Go home to your people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you." So he went throughout the country of Decapolis telling everyone how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were astonished.

Commentary

Listen to the litany of what the prophets of old did! And then at all the sufferings, torture and rejection they lived through—and the world was not worthy of them and yet they did not obtain what they spoke of and hoped for. And yet we, who come after them—look what we have been given! Look at our world, with legions of armies, and those who suffer violence, insanity, do harm to themselves, terrify others, are condemned to live as outcasts, considered inhuman. Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, with a word, commands the man to be sane, whole, in his right mind, a human being. He drives out the insanity, the violence, the injustice and terror with his Word and sends the man home to his family to tell the good news of God to everyone. This is the mercy of the Prophet Jesus. Look what God has done for us. And what have we done in return? How have we relied on the Word of God to alter the world of violence and depravity? Or are we found to be among the legion in the pigs?

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
(Reinsurance for NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION'S Industrial All Risks Policy)

The DOF-NPC-GSIS Joint Bidding Committee, thru the General Insurance Bids and Awards Committee (GIBAC) is inviting qualified local and foreign insurance/reinsurance companies to apply for eligibility and to bid for the reinsurance for the National Power Corporation's Industrial All Risks Policy for the period March 01, 2007 to March 01, 2008, with an approved budget of US$ 18,000,000.00*, all inclusive. (* This has been revised from US$ 17,000,000,000.00 published on January 26, 2007.)

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Issuance of Eligibility and Bidding Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Submission and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Envelopes
Jan 29-Feb 23, 2007 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM OSVP-General Insurance Group 5th Floor, Core D, GSIS Building, Financial Center, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City	February 12, 2007 2:00 PM Molave Room, Makati Skyline Restaurant, 8th Floor, GSIS Building, Financial Center, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City	February 26, 2007 Submission 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM Opening 2:00 PM Molave Room, Makati Skyline Restaurant, 8th Floor, GSIS Building, Financial Center, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

The lead reinsurer, either local or foreign, must have a credit rating of at least "A" by the Standard & Poor's or an equivalent international rating agency as of June 30, 2006 and the other securities must be rated not less than "BB" by the Standard & Poor's or an equivalent international rating agency. The lead reinsurer shall certify that it will provide a lead line of at least 30% of the reinsured risk.

Eligibility and bid documents shall be issued to applicants upon filing of a Letter of Intent to Apply and payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of US$500.00 in the form of cash or manager's check in favor of the National Power Corporation.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bid, Sufficiency of Bid Security, Post-Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of existing laws, rules and regulations. Only applicants who paid bid fees shall be allowed to attend the Pre-Bid Conference and submit its proposals.

The DOF-NPC-GSIS Joint Bidding Committee and the GIBAC reserve the right to reject any and all bids and/or part thereof, or waive any defect therein and may accept the offer which it deems the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid.

January 26, 2007, Manila, Philippines.

The GIBAC Chairman

Agrarian reform plan 'defective,' assert bishops

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE GOVERNMENT'S COMPREhensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) has failed to alleviate the plight of the rural poor, according to the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

In a pastoral statement titled "The Dignity of the Rural Poor—A Gospel Concern," and signed by CBCP president Angel Lagdameo, the bishops described the CARP as "defective." *(See related story on Page A1.)*

"The law was defective in the first place, emasculated from the very beginning by a landlord dominated Congress, and further watered down in its implementation. At this stage, a year before the scheduled end of the program, there is much that has not been done and the general situation of our farmers is still as bleak as ever," according to the pastoral statement read by CBCP vice president Antonio Ledesma in a press conference yesterday.

Selfish interests

According to the CBCP, the government's listlessness in implementing the program showed that the landed class's concerns overpowered those of the poor.

"Selfish class interests outweigh concern for the common good—the main target of the Church's social teaching. And that selfish unconcern translates into sheer neglect of the poor, an utter disregard of the dignity of a whole class merely because of their bad economic plight," the statement said.

The bishops said the government should complete the CARP by next year, but if it failed to do so, the program should be reviewed, extended and be given additional funding.

"If it is not sufficiently implemented by then, the program should be further extended and funded more seriously and generously. But we ask that the law itself be reviewed and improved," the statement said.

The CBCP also proposed that a Rural Congress, or a gathering of farmers in rural areas organized by the Church, be convened so that the farmers could speak out about their problems and propose solutions.

Lack of respect

"They will be effectively asserting the dignity that for so long has been denied them," the statement said, adding that the lack of respect for the poor's dignity contributes to the injustices and inequalities they are experiencing.

The bishops also called for a stop to "uncaring" evictions and demolitions of informal settlers. "We have laws that give us the proper process for eviction. Let these laws be respected and followed, especially by law-enforcing agencies."

The CBCP said relocation sites with adequate facilities like water, electricity, roads and access to school and work must be provided, and consultations must be conducted with the families to be moved.

Security of tenure

The bishops lamented that the government officials failed to follow through on their promise to provide security of tenure to families on government properties.

"Many of these proclamations are not followed. They have remained empty words. Let the officials not play on the basic needs of the people, and coddle them in the pursuit of election victory," the CBCP said.

Ex-Pinoy NYC cop eulogized

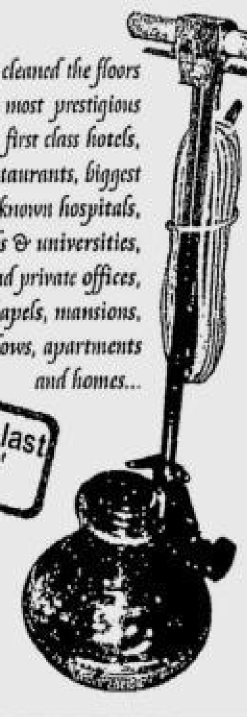
NEW YORK—A Philippine-born New York City police officer who died five years after working 16-hour shifts amid the toxic debris of the World Trade Center after the Sept. 11 attacks was remembered by family and friends at his funeral.

But the Mass on Saturday for Cesar Borja, 52, was also a reminder of the growing number of Sept. 11 first responders reporting health problems.

Borja, who was awaiting a lung transplant, died Tuesday just hours before his son Ceasar attended President George W. Bush's State of the Union address in Washington as a guest of New York Sen. Hillary Clinton. Ceasar, 21, hoped to meet with Bush to discuss the ongoing health problems of workers who spent time in the World Trade Center rubble after the 2001 terrorist attack.

The elder Borja's body was brought into St. Josaphat's Church in the Bayside area by a police honor guard on a brisk winter morning. The officers carried his flag-draped casket into the church as police bagpipers played and one family member collapsed in tears.

"It's so sad, but we are proud for him," said family friend Alicia Orca before the hour-long service began. *AP*



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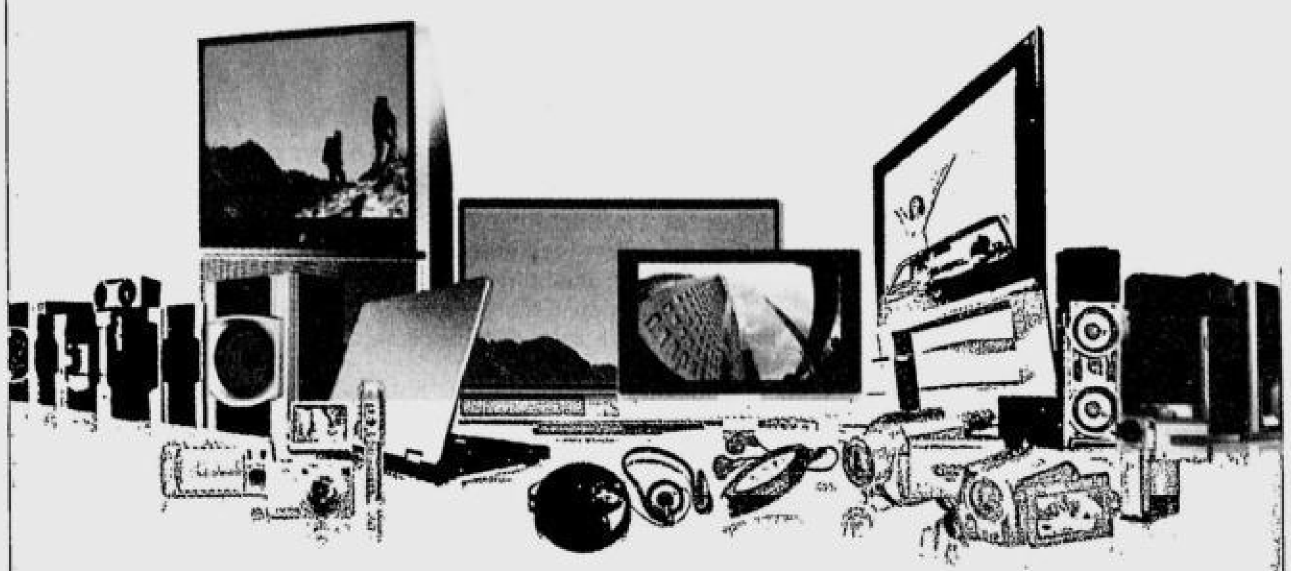

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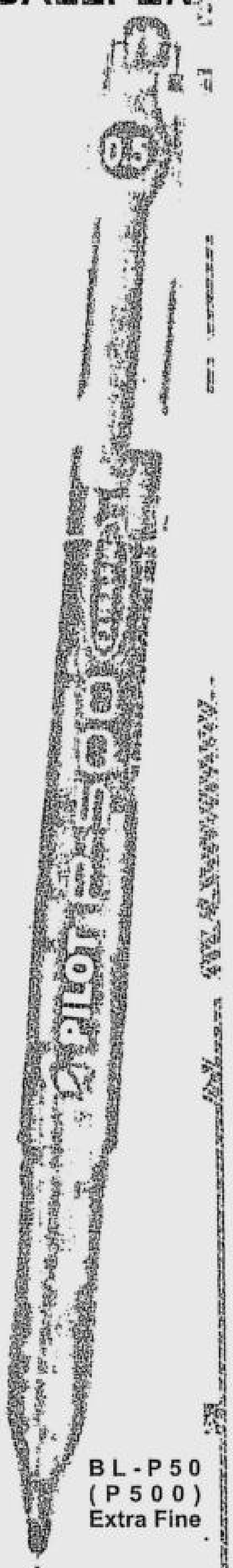

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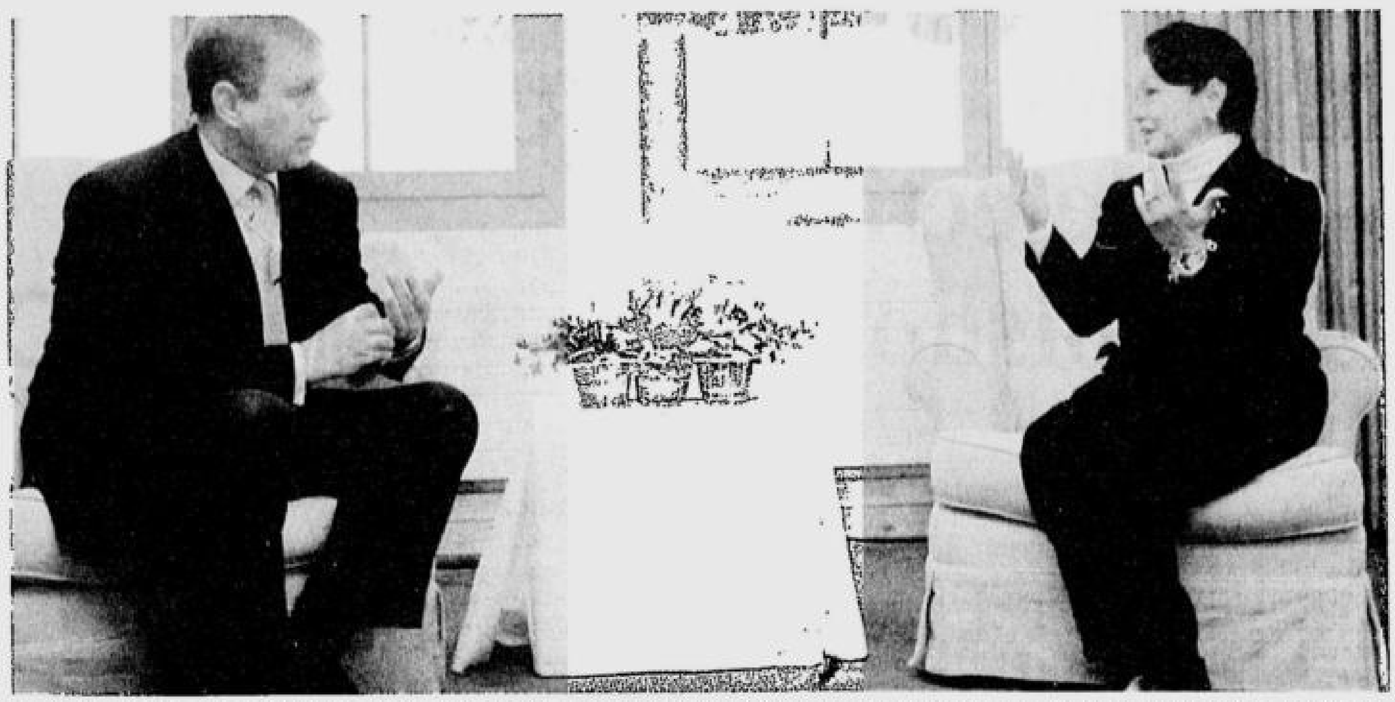
Richer nations make firmer, more positive commitments at Davos



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo gestures to the Duke of York who paid a courtesy call on her at the Arabella Sheraton Hotel in Davos, Switzerland.

PCPO-MALACAÑANG PHOTO

DAVOS, SWITZERLAND—THIS year's gathering of the world's rich and powerful at the World Economic Forum produced fresh commitments to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, a glimmer of hope on liberalizing world trade, determination to combat global warming—and emotional appeals at Sunday's closing session to help the world's neediest escape poverty.

The five-day political and economic brainstorming session was less glitzy this year—no stars like Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Sharon Stone or Richard Gere who have stolen the limelight in the past.

Instead, the forum returned to its roots of international problem-solving with 24 world leaders, over 800 top business leaders and dozens of social activists and academics discussing a host of issues from the conflict in Iraq and Iran's nuclear ambitions to the continuing rise of China and India as economic powers.

The new stars of Davos were the young entrepreneurs—many whose fortunes have been made on the Internet and with new technology—like YouTube co-founder Chad Hurley, who announced that his wildly successful video site will start sharing revenue with its millions of users.

Hurley and Caterina Fake, founder of the Internet photo-sharing site Flikr, shared the stage with Microsoft founder Bill Gates, the world's richest man and now a Davos veteran.

Google co-founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page were also hotly pursued for their views on the site's expansion.

The biggest political players at Davos were from the Middle East.

In emotional speeches at the forum, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas pledged to forge peace.

Long road to peace

After a meeting on the sidelines, Livni said they explored "any way to push the process," but she suggested the road to peace would be long.

Jordan's King Abdullah II told the forum that the need for progress was urgent because the Palestinian-Israeli standoff was a "firestarter" with vast potential to destabilize the region.

"I believe that time is running out" to solve the crisis, he warned.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair backed Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government and US President George W. Bush's immediate plans to increase troops there.

Iraqi Vice President Adil Abdul-Mahdi said US forces could turn events around—but many others were highly skeptical.

Blair and US Sen. John McCain, a possible Republican presidential candidate, were both optimistic about global action on climate change—one of the hottest topics at Davos. McCain said he expects the new Democratic-controlled Congress to take action very soon "on this compelling issue."

On another hot issue, nearly 30 countries met on the sidelines of the forum Saturday to discuss the lack of progress in the World Trade Organization talks. They "expressed a strong wish for a quick resumption" of negotiations—but stopped short of making improved offers to break a deadlock that has lasted for six months.

Nonetheless, WTO Director General Pascal Lamy said there was new energy at the meeting and India's Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath declared: "Despite the cold outside in Davos, we have been able to defreeze the talks that were frozen."

End violence in Darfur

There were calls from Blair, musician Bono, South African President Thabo Mbeki and Liberian President Ellen Sirleaf Johnson to governments and companies to keep their promises of aid to Africa—and redouble their efforts.

While one of the world's biggest problems—the four-year-old conflict in Sudan's Darfur region—wasn't on the Davos agenda, Blair and others raised it and said there must be action to end the violence that has claimed some 200,000 lives and forced 2.5 million people from their homes.

At Sunday's closing session, which focused on the right of all inhabitants of planet Earth to live a dignified life, Norway's Crown Prince Haakonen spoke of visiting a poor township outside Durban, South Africa, and speaking to a couple who were both HIV positive and had three children and a disabled sister.

The prince, his voice breaking with emotion, said the man told him, "'I'm very concerned. I know that my wife and I will not be here for long'—and then, he looked me in the eye and said, 'Please do everything you can to help people like me.'"

"I think he said this to each and every one of us," the prince said to the several hundred-strong VIP audience, urging them to make dignity "the basic guiding principle of all actions."

The movers and shakers headed home with different highpoints from Davos.

"It's encouraging that some of the business leaders understand that if they want to go forward with globalization, they have to pay more attention to questions of equity and fairness," said US Congressman Barney Frank.

Kamel Lazaar, president and CEO of Saudi Arabia's Swicorp Investment Bank, said "the great thing about Davos is that in a few days you can do meetings that it takes 12 months to do—and it saves you all the hassle of travel and organizing."

Psychologist and sex therapist Dagmar O'Connor said her sessions on self-esteem were oversubscribed.

"In Davos, psychologically, relationship-wise, same problems as everywhere else in the world—but they're under more stress," she said. *AP*

GMA: The belle of the ball

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo was the "belle of the ball" during the just concluded annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in the winter resort town of Davos in Switzerland.

Ms Arroyo said at a briefing on the flight to Manila from Zurich that a WEF official had informed her that the dinner given in her honor was the biggest during the five-day meeting.

"According to Hand Schwab of the WEF, among all the business dinners and luncheons, the dinner that was given for me had the best quality of attendance, because of the presence of so many chief executives from very large corporations," Ms Arroyo said.

She described it as the "most high-powered business meeting."

The dinner, hosted by Maurice Amon of security solutions provider Sicpa Holdings SA based in Lausanne, Switzerland, was held on the night she arrived in Europe's highest town on Jan. 25.

The dinner was attended by the chief executive officers of leading companies such as Coca-Cola Co., Nestle SA, IBM Corp., Merrill Lynch, AIG, Citibank, Royal Dutch Shell, PepsiCo, Convergys and the vice chair of Deutsche Bank.

Representatives of multilateral lending institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund were also on hand.

Turnaround

Ms Arroyo attributed the good attendance partly to the turnaround in the Philippine economy.

Indicators include the sterling performance of the Philippine stock market, which has been hitting its highest levels since April of 1997 or before the Asian currency crisis struck, lower risk premiums on Philippine debt papers as well as successful efforts to keep the budget deficit in check.

These are expected to lead to a growth in the gross domestic product of at least 5.7 percent this year.

"There was great interest in the Philippines. We talked about a broad range of topics," the President said. "We talked about how we've been able to turn around the economy in the Philippines, and I told them about the economic reforms."

The discussion was so animated that Ms Arroyo said the WEF even expressed interest in organizing a follow-up meeting on Philippine prospects in Manila.

Ms Arroyo informed the group that the next major area for structural reform was the power sector.

Aside from the economic program, Ms Arroyo said she and the various leaders talked about the achievements of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the stalled Doha round of free trade talks and government efforts to put an end to the al-Qaida linked Abu Sayyaf group in Mindanao.

GMA hopes economic growth ...

From page A1

pushed through tax reforms and overseen a boom in white-collar businesses like call centers and tourism.

She said the Philippines now accounted for about 40 percent of the business process outsourcing (BPO) market, which employs 250,000 Filipinos, up from 2,000 just six years ago.

"Almost every BPO company I talk to tells me they want to double their workforce. So it's going to keep growing," she said.

Tourism

The President also said tourism was growing more than 10 percent a year in the archipelago and had tripled since 2001 "because we have beautiful beaches and we have beautiful smiles."

To back up that service sector growth, Ms Arroyo is aware that the government needs to spend new taxes on the Philippines' creaking infrastructure, from roads to energy, and to keep attracting foreign investment to create jobs.

"The government is not the best businessman," she said.

"To make the power sector efficient it should be in private sector hands. So we have a very big privatization program."

Ms Arroyo said she had found massive investor interest in areas including mining, tourism and information technology at Davos but declined to comment on any possible future deals.

This month, the Department of Finance said it expected privatization revenues to leap to more than P25.7 billion this year from about P4.3 billion in 2006.

Charter change

The next projects on Ms Arroyo's table include changing the Philippine Constitution—not only to alter the political system but also to remove foreign ownership limits in lucrative sectors like property and media.

After a Supreme Court ruling that mining was not subject to the ownership cap, the industry boomed and is growing.

"If we reform the Constitution we will have even more investments," said Ms Arroyo, whose plans to alter the Constitution have been fiercely criticized as being a ploy to extend her powers because it would scrap the Senate, packed with her foes.

"We have to reform the political system because right now (it) is quite messy and not worthy of a modern nation," she said.

Elections

The current system slows things down because different groups grind legislation into gridlock, according to the President.

Ms Arroyo said she would keep working on the Constitution over the course of 2007's local and congressional elections, dismissing suggestions the elections may be postponed and talk that the results could be a reflection on her policies.

Asked whether overspending on election campaigns could endanger the Philippine economy, she said: "We have a budget and we can't spend beyond that so there is an intrinsic discipline." *Reports from Reuters and Nikko Dizon*

Disunited opposition cause for national concern

From page A1

The unraveling of the opposition even before it collides with the administration's political machine is not a welcome development but a cause for national concern.

A fractured opposition, already wounded by internal and petty squabbles, cannot mount a credible challenge to halt the abuse of power by the Arroyo administration and its congressional allies, which have only been held in check by a vigilant Supreme Court and appellate courts during the past two years.

At this critical juncture, an overbearing and increasingly repressive presidency requires a strong political counterpoise in an opposition movement that is aware of its responsibility to present a coalition forged by shared issues, policies and programs.

Dire consequences

Frankly, I am concerned over the debility of the opposition because its demolition in the May elections could have dire consequences. An institutional political opposition is a necessity in Philippine democracy.

Government abuses have to be stopped in the halls of Congress within a legal system of checks and balances. If this can't be done by changing the balance of power in Congress, then the path is left wide open for the entry of extralegal means to change leadership, such as a coup and people power in the streets, of which we have had an excess of failed attempts over the past two decades.

This is why it is hard to be unconcerned over the inability of the current opposition to present a solid front, since there are few democratic opportunities available to the people to change things, through periodic and regular elections.

It is even more dismaying to observe the overconfidence of UNO, which believes that its senatorial ticket would make a clean sweep in what it expects will be a massive protest vote in May. No such thing ever has happened in Philippine elections, even during moments of phenomenal national outrage, such as the 1971 Plaza Miranda bombing carnage.

There is the prevailing belief that the opposition's ticket is overcrowded by a scramble of candidates who sense a landslide.

UNO's big mistake

The big mistake of UNO is that it is taking too many things for granted—Ms Arroyo's popularity ratings have stayed at the bottom for a long time; the regime has received devastating blows from the Supreme Court striking down, in a series of landmark decisions, excesses in the exercise by the President of emergency powers and attempts to ram through Congress the people's initiative to change the Constitution; and the administration is ready to topple from the sheer weight of the issues piling up against it.

True, there is no want for issues for the opposition to exploit, but the opposition has a lot of work to do to aggregate these issues as a focus to fuel national anger.

But if we examine closely the defections of Sotto, Oreta, Tatad and Enrile, we can see the vulnerability of these assumptions regarding the certainty of an opposition sweep in May.

All four politicians had been identified as staunch supporters of deposed President Joseph Estrada during his impeachment in 2000-01.

Estrada is a leading convenor of UNO, whose initiative is not entirely accepted and whose personal motives to settle scores with Ms Arroyo are not beyond suspect.

Sotto and Oreta bolted the LDP to cross over to Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition, still an ally of the ruling Lakas coalition in the House.

Enrile quit as chair of Estrada's tiny PMP, saying that while he was committed to support San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, son of Estrada, as candidate for the Senate, he could not "in conscience" support some personalities the UNO was considering for its ticket.

'Family park' slammed

Tatad slammed the fact that siblings and children of incumbent senators were being drafted into the opposition's Senate lineup, blasting the practice as a "mad and shallow family park." Tatad raised the dynasty issue that cuts across the ranks of the opposition as well as the administration.

These examples illustrate the opposition's problem in presenting a package of issues rising above narrow personal considerations. And while the opposition has been revealing its cracks, the administration has been exploiting these fissures. It is reported to be putting together a "unity ticket."

A 12-member slate is reportedly being formed by administration coalition leaders, including former President Fidel V. Ramos, Speaker Jose de Venecia and Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Gabriel Claudio, on behalf of the Lakas-CMD majority in the House; Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno of Kampi, a minor party in the administration's coalition, and Cojuangco's NPC.

Note that these leaders are the ruling coalition's big guns. With their intervention in the selection, we can see the reconstruction of the monolithic coalition structure that has kept Ms Arroyo in power over the past two years and allowed her to crush two attempts to impeach her.

This structure is based on a broad local constituency. This is the monolith the opposition is facing.

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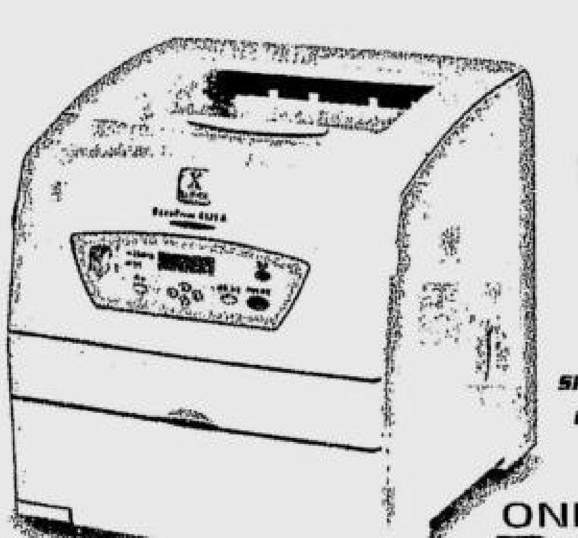


Military man is new witness in Sanchez slay try

By Marlon Alexander Luistro
Inquirer Southern Luzon

BATANGAS CITY—A NEW WITNESS has emerged to claim that Batangas Vice Gov. Richard Recto had conspired with the disgruntled military Magdalo group in an attempt to assasinate Batangas Governor Armando Sanchez in June last year.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Philippine National Police–Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (PNP-CIDG) on Friday presented the witness.

Escaped death

Lawyer Virgilio Pablico, CIDG legal office chief based at Fort Bonifacio, identified him as 1Lt. Nathaniel Rabonza, member of the Philippine Air Force Special Forces Regiment, who is currently detained for his alleged involvement in the July 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

Sanchez narrowly escaped death when a bomb explosion ripped through his Hummer SUV as he was about to leave the provincial capitol premises. The explosion killed his bodyguard, P02 Eric Landicho, and driver, Luisito Icaro.

Sanchez sustained major degree burns in different parts of the body.

'Tet Offensive'

In a five-page sworn statement, Rabonza said he met with lawyer Christopher Belmonte, Betina Balderama, Lt. Angelbert Gay and 2nd Lt. Aldrin Baldonado in a house at La Vista, Quezon City in March 2006 to discuss the Magdalo group's "Tet Offensive."

The plan, which was named after Vietnam's Tet Offensive included the assassination of Sanchez and the bombing of public places in Manila.

A few days after the meeting, Rabonza said he met with the same group somewhere in Quezon City and proceeded to Recto's residence in Greenmeadows, Quezon City.

There, he said, Belmonte and Recto discussed whether the latter was "still interested in his plan for the group to assassinate Governor Sanchez," and Belmonte assured Recto of the plan's success.

Requirements

Rabonza further alleged that he gave Recto the requirements to execute the plan, which included a motorcycle, car, communication equipment and a safehouse in Batangas.

He alleged that Belmonte later gave him, 1st Lt. Antonio Bumidang and Sarmiento P15,000 each after the conversation with Recto.

Weight to the evidence

Rabonza, however, claimed that he didn't participate in the assassination attempt on Sanchez.

Lawyer Ronaldo Geron, provincial administrator, said he believed that Rabonza's statement would add weight to the evidence.

The INQUIRER tried to get the side of Recto but the latter declined to comment until he received a copy of Rabonza's affidavit.

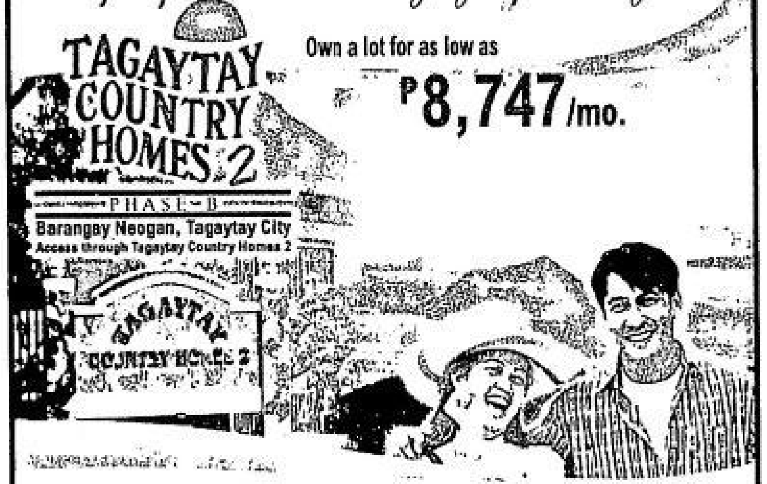
He earlier denied the allegations in a 15-page counteraffidavit submitted to the Batangas City Prosecutor's Office.

Charged

"I categorically state that I have absolutely nothing to do with the planning, financing and execution of the alleged assassination attempt on the life of Governor Sanchez," Recto had said in his counteraffidavit.

Recto was charged four months ago with frustrated murder, murder and crimes involving destruction of property, together with Belmonte, Christina Antonio, Balderama, Gay, Baldonado, Lt. Kiram Sadava and six other unidentified respondents, who witnesses Sadava and Bumidang pointed to as suspects in their separate affidavits.

Sadava earlier said he joined the team of Belmonte in conducting a surveillance of the Batangas provincial capitol.



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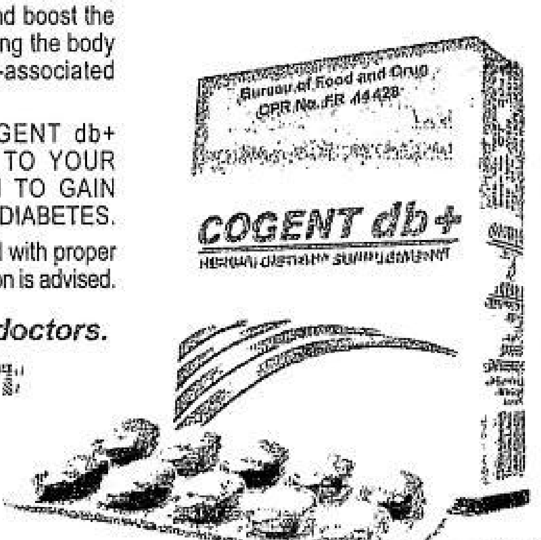

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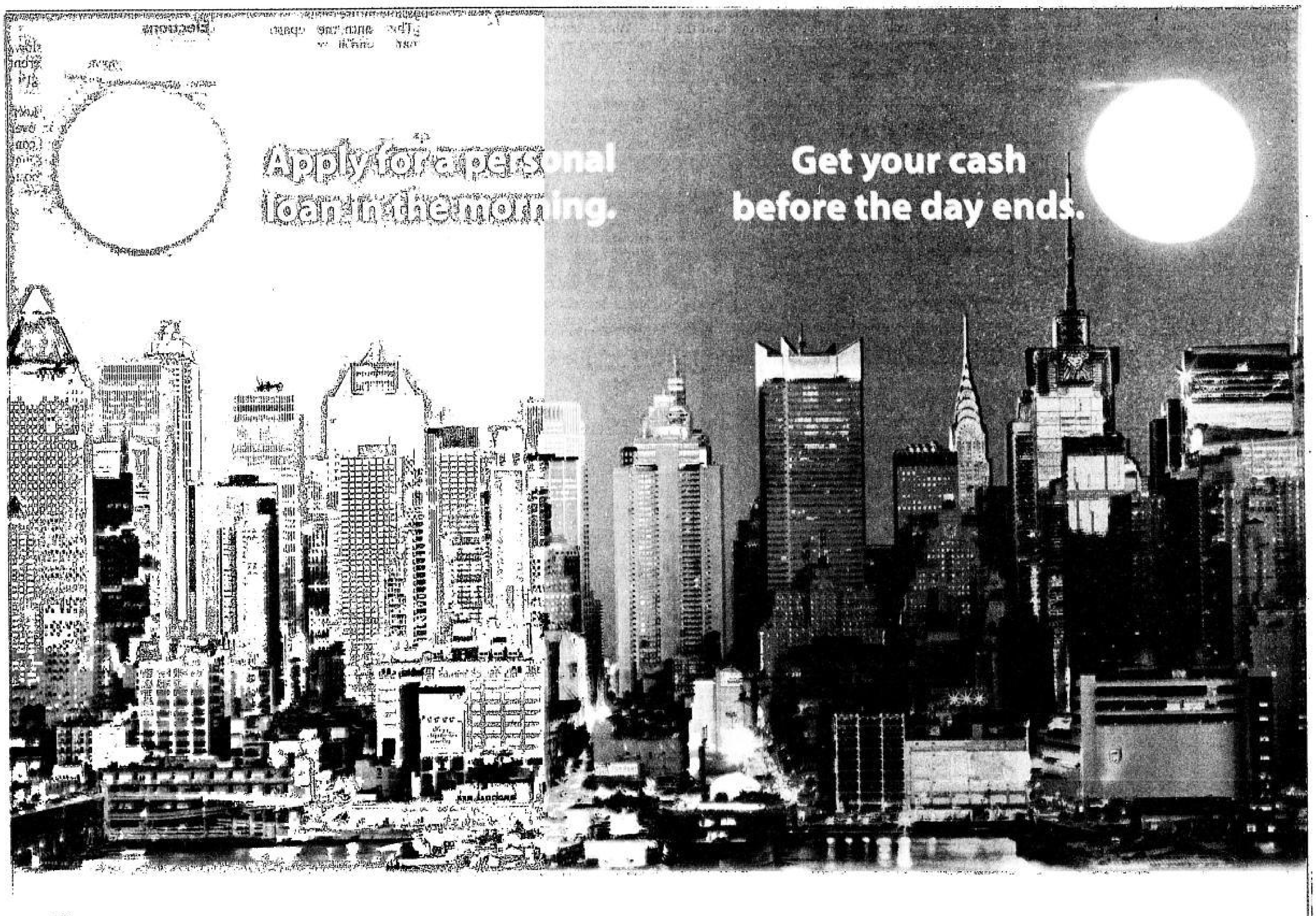
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'Like a kiss of death'

"HER ENDORSEMENT IS like a kiss of death"—that was how San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito reacted to attempts by President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration to lure some opposition figures to its side for the May 14 midterm elections.

"Filipinos do not like turncoats," the son of jailed former President Joseph Estrada told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Without naming names, he said the defection of former allies to administration parties "will weaken their chances" at the polls. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Who's admin, who's opposition?

From page A1

position members appear to be succumbing to it, Filipino voters—come May 14—may no longer be able to distinguish who is fighting whom, in what could be the country's most confusing elections.

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara and House Minority Leader Francis Escudero are the latest targets of administration blandishments.

Unbelievable?

Not to Speaker Jose de Venecia, who told the INQUIRER yesterday that administration efforts to build a "powerful alliance" with opposition parties were already "in the advanced stage."

"While the opposition is disintegrating, Lakas-CMD and its allies are gaining strength, and swelling in numbers," boasted De Venecia, national president of the ruling party Lakas.

De Venecia was tongue-tied when asked specifically about Escudero, the leader of the opposition in the House of Representatives who twice led an unsuccessful effort to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"No comment," he said.

But a ranking official of Lakas in the chamber confirmed that Escudero had a "sure slot" in the administration coalition.

"He could be the new face of the reinvigorated administration slate. Imagine what he will bring into the slate," said the official, who asked not to be named, saying he did not want to preempt Escudero's decision.

There was no immediate reaction from Escudero's camp.

Cast a wide net

A top Malacañang official all but confirmed that the Palace was casting its net wide.

Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Gabriel Claudio urged allies and coalition partners to be open to the possibility of the inclusion of oppositionists in the administration's so-called Team Unity.

Claudio made the appeal following concerns raised by Palace allies on the possible entry of former Senators Vicente Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta in the administration lineup.

"The situation is still fluid but we should have some degree of flexibility in putting up the lineup ... We should not preempt the possibility of these scenarios," Claudio said in a phone interview.

Authorized talks

He reiterated that a unity ticket would not only ensure victory at the polls but also "lessen the atmosphere of conflict in the elections."

Claudio would not confirm if the administration was indeed talking to Sotto, Oreta or even former Sen. Loren Legarda, or whether it intended to take all of them in.

He noted, though, that the administration coalition was a big group and it was possible some allies were holding "authorized or otherwise" talks with some members of the opposition.

He believed any such negotiations were "being done in good faith."

Inseparable trio

A reliable source said that Sotto and Oreta, who recently left the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and joined the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), and Legarda had agreed to stick together and run under a common ticket.

The source could not confirm whether this meant Legarda would join the NPC—an ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo—as well.

Sotto said that his and Legarda's "circle of friends" had suggested as early as December last year that they join the NPC.

He said he had not spoken to Legarda about this but "I'm sure she is contemplating on it."

Sotto said that his and Oreta's inclusion in the administration ticket remained a speculation.

Lured by both camps

De Venecia said the administration had to unify with "sympathetic" members of the opposition if it were to survive the midterm polls.

He claimed the administration had already recruited eight candidates to run "under one formidable and historic coalition."

Besides Legarda, Malacañang is also seriously courting Angara and fellow reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto, De Venecia said.

Angara said a week ago that he was being actively sought by both camps.

Angara, the leader of the LDP, led the formation of Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino under which the late actor Fernando Poe Jr. and Legarda ran for president and vice president, respectively, in the last polls.

Palace gives up

As for Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, all De Venecia said was: "Well, he belongs to the opposition."

The Lakas official, who requested anonymity, said Malacañang had given up on Senate President Manuel Villar and Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan.

"They are forming a coalition with the United Opposition," the official said.

He said the administration had nine candidates so far—Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor, Representatives Gilbert Teodoro and Juan Miguel Zubiri, Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, Angara, Recto, Oreta, Sotto and possibly Escudero.

As reports of horse-trading swirled, the camp of deposed President Joseph Estrada accused the administration of trying to break up the United Opposition by pirating its "leading lights."

People will know

"The administration will always try to break the opposition. We are not surprised," lawyer Rufus Rodriguez, spokesperson of Estrada and Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP), said in an interview.

"The people will be able to discern that this is a ploy to break the UNO," he said.

A source close to Estrada said: "Those are dirty tricks they're playing on the opposition. They're trying to throw a monkey wrench into the coalition."

Rodriguez voiced confidence that Legarda, as well as former Sen. Nikki Coseteng, would stick it out with UNO, which is finalizing its senatorial slate with coalition partners Nacionalista Party and Liberal Party.

"As far as Legarda is concerned, we're confident that she will not allow herself to be wooed by the administration which caused massive cheating against her in the last elections," he said.

Legarda has a pending protest case against Vice President Noli de Castro. *With a report from TJ Burgonio*

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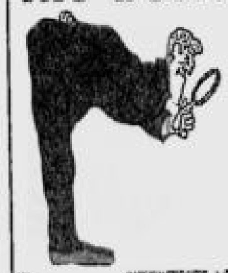

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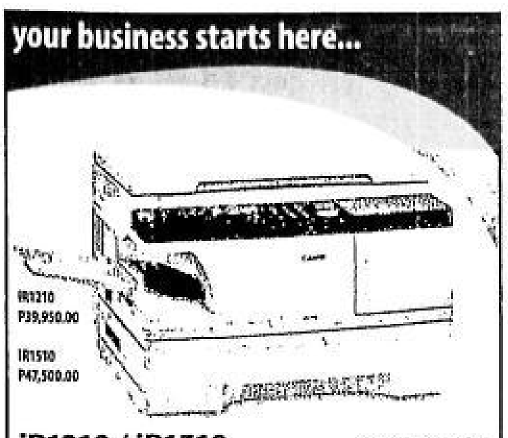

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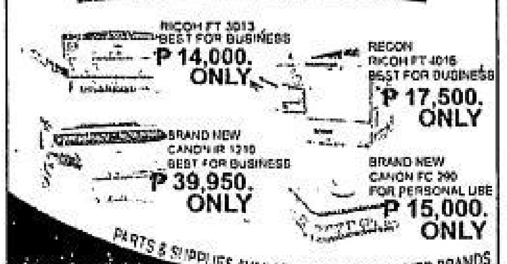

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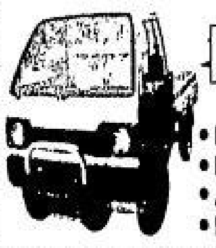

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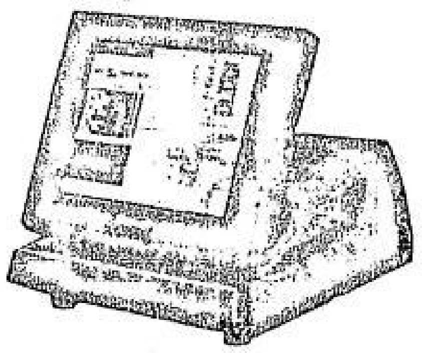

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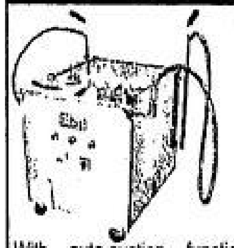

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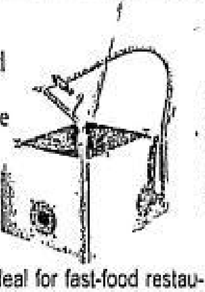

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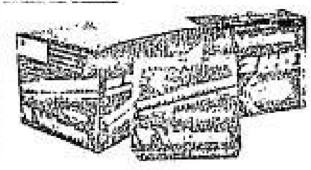

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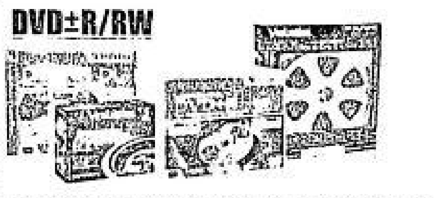

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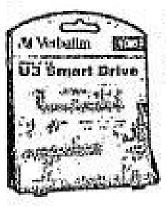

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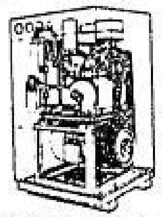

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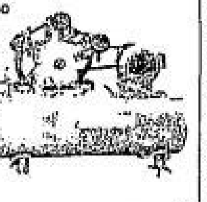

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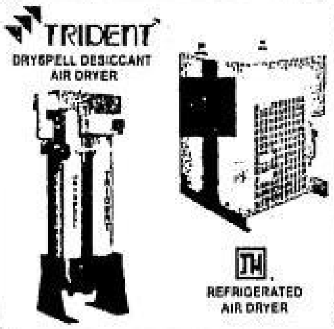

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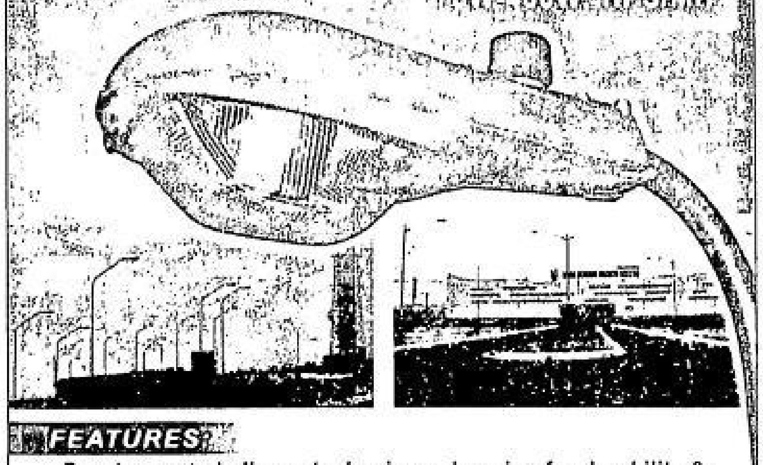

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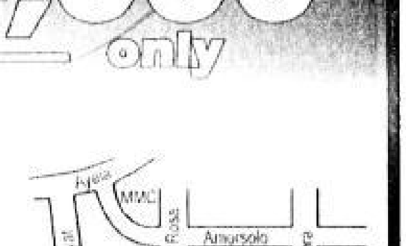

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Bishops go all out to ensure fair polls

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From page A1

official believed to be Virgilio Garcillano.

The opposition has claimed that the conversations showed that Ms Arroyo cheated in the 2004 presidential election, a charge denied by the President.

The allegations of cheating against Ms Arroyo led to street protests and the filing of impeachment charges against her, which she survived with the support of her allies in the House of Representatives.

Fertilizer fund scam

Ledesma, Cagayan de Oro archbishop, said other unresolved issues were the P728-million fertilizer fund scam and the not yet fully disclosed Mayuga report on the alleged participation of military officers in electoral fraud in the presidential election three years ago.

The P728-million fund, originally earmarked for the purchase of farm inputs, was believed to have been diverted and distributed as largesse to allies of the administration to ensure Ms Arroyo's victory in the May 2004 presidential election.

Ledesma said the midterm elections could provide closure to the country's problems since it could serve as a referendum on Ms Arroyo's leadership.

"It could act as a people's referendum. Maybe they accept the explanation of the President if the administration wins. If the opposition wins, they don't," the CBCP leader said in an ambush interview.

At stake in the May polls are more than 17,000 positions, including half the seats in the 24-member Senate and all the seats (about 260) in the House of Representatives.

Analysts have said the elections are crucial because the opposition could win enough House seats to impeach Ms Arroyo over vote-rigging and corruption allegations and send her to trial in the Senate.

Responsible voting

In the pastoral letter, Lagdameo said parish organizations and institutions should work with civic and religious associations that are acting to ensure that the elections are credible, like the Church-based Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting.

"This means that every parish organization and institution—and the BECs (Basic Ecclesial Communities) most especially—be mobilized to the utmost to do what each can do toward that end. This means, too, that they must form linkages with one another and with other like-minded civic and religious associations that are working to help clean the dirt from our easily corrupted electoral process," he said.

The pastoral letter, titled "Choose wise, discerning and experienced people," was released following the CBCP's 94th plenary assembly, a biannual gathering in which the bishops discuss current issues.

Lagdameo said it was evident in its past performance that the Commission on Elections, which is tasked with overseeing the conduct of the polls, needed help.

"This is an effort on the part of civilian society to help the Comelec establish a peaceful and honest election. Because we had known in the past that it really needed help," Lagdameo said when asked if his call for parishes to be involved in the polls meant that the bishops did not think the Comelec could fulfill its mandate.

LAGDAMEO

The bishops' earlier calls for electoral reform and the reorganization of the Comelec to bring back the trust of the people still stands, according to the CBCP president.

He said the bishops did not discuss electoral candidates during their plenary assembly, but added that he heard that some dioceses were campaigning for prolife and antigambling candidates.

Garci's friends

The appointment of Comelec personnel identified with Garcillano to plum positions in the poll body could mar the credibility of elections, according to Ledesma.

He said he heard that the officials had been assigned to Cagayan de Oro.

"The local citizens are quite concerned about them because it will put a shadow on the credibility of elections. And we hope that really even up to now, the CBCP has called for a thorough revamp of the Comelec itself to restore the credibility of elections and that statement still holds," he said.

Ledesma said he was happy with the three latest commissioners appointed to the Comelec, and hoped that the fourth would be credible as well.

In an address to the CBCP on Jan. 24, Nandy Pacheco, secretary general of Ang Kapatiran party, appealed to the bishops to help it find the right candidates for the local positions from congressman down to the last councilor.

He said Ang Kapatiran would focus more on moral principles than political expediency, more on the interests of the poor and vulnerable than the interests of the rich and the powerful, more on the pursuit of the common good than the demands of special interests, more on the culture of life and peace than the culture of death and violence.

"With malice toward none, and with charity for all, Ang Kapatiran is determined to put an end to dirty politics. In other words, Ang Kapatiran will be the antidote to dirty politics," Pacheco said.

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From page A1

department may take, you are directed to move for the suspension of the proceedings before the said court (Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 54) pending the evaluation of the said petition, in the interest of justice."

Signed by Gonzalez himself, the memo stated: "For immediate compliance and approval."

The petition for review cited by Gonzalez was filed by Memei S. Boratong on behalf of her husband Amin. In a separate letter, Memei asked the justice secretary to "allow her husband, Amin, to prove his innocence before he be exposed to the rigors of a full-blown trial."

"The Office of the Secretary is the last option by which we felt justice can be obtained," she said.

The date of Memei's letter—Nov. 30—was the same as that of Gonzalez's memo ordering prosecutors to seek the suspension of the court proceedings.

No compliance with the memo took place.

What occurred, outside the knowledge of media at the time, was an "internal, silent but very strong act or resistance" to the memo, according to a police investigator involved in the case.

Members of the Philippine National Police Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Team (Aidsot) and the group of state prosecutors assigned to the case, mostly women, rejected the Nov. 30 memo and directly complained to Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, according to a source present in the meeting with Zuño held at the DOJ building.

Zuño told the group he had no idea about Gonzalez's memo, said the source, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitive nature of his position.

An officer of PNP-Aidsot, with the rank of chief inspector, said, *"Kung ililigtas at pakakawalan lang nila si Boratong, pakawalan na rin natin ang 300 na hinuli natin doon dahil kung tutuusin, sila ang biktima, sila ang pinagkakakitaan ni Boratong, lokohan na ito, matanggal na ako kung matatanggal pero kapag itinuloy nila iyan, lalapit ako sa media, magsusumbong ako* (If they are going to save and release Boratong, we might as well also release the 300 people we arrested during the raid. When you come down to it, they are the victims. Boratong was making money out of them. Even if I lose my job, if they go through with this, I'll go to the media and tell all about it)."

Everybody's fight

That officer didn't go to the media, but somebody else from the PNP did reach this reporter and handed over photocopies of the series of memos from Gonzalez's office, specifically on the Boratong case.

"We cannot allow the secretary to lawyer for the biggest local drug lord busted in history and let him get away just like that," said the officer, a senior superintendent.

The officer said the women prosecutors pursuing the case told PNP-Aidsot members that this was no longer Aidsot's fight alone but "everybody's fight because we are fighting a syndicate and we know what the syndicate can do to save their heads."

BORATONG

The Nov. 30 memo was followed by another memo from the office of the justice secretary. This time, it was addressed to the main witness in the cases filed against Boratong.

Witness protection program

The Dec. 27 memo told witness Samer Palao: "This is to inform you that after reevaluation of your coverage under the witness protection security and benefit program (WPSBP), we are revoking your admission effective November 24, 2006."

The brief was signed by Gonzalez.

Interviewed in his office, Gonzalez told this reporter: "The problem here is the witness against Boratong is his half-brother, who is more guilty than him and he, is in fact, the real one and he is being coddled by the police."

Palao is being held at the PNP Custodial Center in Camp Crame because of "possible threats against his life," according to the police officer directly responsible for his security.

"We cannot afford to compromise the security of Palao," the officer said. "He is very vital in this case; he is the key witness in all the cases against Boratong. That's why he needs all the protection from government whom he helped voluntarily without any monetary consideration, except a guarantee that he and his family is secured."

Appeal to Gonzalez

In volunteering to become a government witness, Palao claimed that he was a trusted ally of Boratong, an insider who supposedly knew the extent of Boratong's alleged operation of the

Gov't response to killings 'most unsatisfactory'

From page A1

the shameful "extrajudicial" killings of unarmed crusaders for justice and equality is most unsatisfactory, their protestations of concern not too convincing," the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines said in a pastoral statement.

The statement issued at the close of the CBCP's two-day plenary and read by CBCP vice president Antonio Ledesma in a nationally televised news conference also demanded strongly a "greater and more effective performance" by the nation's guardians and protectors of peace.

Leftwing organizations and human rights groups say that more than 700 activists have been killed in political violence since Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo became President in 2001, a figure that includes victims of armed confrontations. The INQUIRER count is 270 as of Jan. 23.

Amnesty International said last August it was gravely concerned that soldiers and police could be involved in the killings. It estimated 51 activists were killed in the first six months of 2006 after 66 were murdered in the whole of 2005.

Later that month, Ms Arroyo formed a fact-finding commission headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo, 74, to investigate the killings.

But relatives of victims and leftist groups boycotted the commission's hearings, saying the four-member panel that included the state prosecutor and the National Bureau of Investigation chief lacked credibility and independence.

"Only four witnesses—all military top brass—testified before the commission in Manila before its members conducted several hearings late last year in Bacolod and Davao cities, mainly on agrarian problems.

The commission last week submitted its report to Ms Arroyo before she departed for the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and a member said it was up to Malacañang to release its findings.

Poverty and violence

The CBCP said the political violence was a result of widespread rural and urban poverty. It lamented that the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, which it described as a major effort to ease the plight of the poor, had not been fully implemented. *(See story on Page A7.)*

It urged that the agrarian reform law be reviewed and improved and the program be funded and extended if found inadequate. It was planned for completion by next year.

The CBCP said the poor implementation of the program mirrored the "still overpowering opposition of the landed classes, the traditional political and economic elite of our country." It said this "selfish unconcern" translated into "sheer neglect of the poor, an utter disregard of the dignity of a whole class merely because of their bad economic plight."

"This disregard is horrendously displayed in the recent extrajudicial killings, perpetrated by groups from both the Right and the Left, of farmers whose only 'crime' is their continuing struggle for agrarian reform or their inability to pay the 'revolutionary tax' demanded of them by the NPA (communist New People's Army)."

"As a religious people—and it doesn't matter whether we are Christians, Muslims or adherents of other religions—we must vehemently condemn the continuing murder of such rural folk," the statement said.

"We condemn, too, just as vehemently, the unabated killings of unarmed men and women on the mere charge or suspicion that they support or belong to leftist political groups," the CBCP said. "Condemning evil is not enough … we must try bringing an end to evils that harm people and their good."

The CBCP urged the development of Basic Ecclesial Communities or BEC-type church communities and organizations that would find solutions to social problems. It noted that this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Rural Congress of 1967 that concluded that the Church most go to neglected villages. The prelates proposed that a congress be held again this year but that farmers "must do the speaking."

"We contribute not a little to the injustices and inequalities that have become deeply ingrained in our national life," the bishops said.

"Today, the murders and killings, the corruption and thieving, the crimes that are being committed daily with impunity against our poor, these we see too are all rooted in the practical denials of the basic human dignity and rights of our very poor."

"Today, we see only too clearly the need for the reform not only of our national institutions but of our very moral fiber as a people," the statement said.

Bishop Juan de Dios Pueblos, a member of the Melo Commission, has told reporters that the panel had found that the military, private armies of some politicians and the NPA and its front organizations were all involved in the killings.

With reports from Fe Zamora, Reuters

o of Gonzalez

shabu *tiangge* in Pasig raided by the police in February last year.

The *tiangge* was a cluster of drug dens inside a shanty neighborhood located near City Hall. Its discovery led to more than 300 arrests and the sacking of the entire police precinct in the area.

On learning about his being dropped from the witness protection program, Palao wrote Gonzalez a letter on Jan. 15 expressing surprise at the government action despite what he said was his cooperation in the campaign against drugs and his decision to testify against Boratong.

Palao is also a witness against Boratong in a murder case, a civil forfeiture case involving more than P900 million in bank deposits filed by the Anti-Money Laundering Council before a Manila court, and criminal and administrative cases against the alleged police protectors of the shabu *tiangge*.

Fear for his life

Palao told Gonzalez in his letter that he feared for his life and that of his family.

In Filipino, he said: "My days are numbered … My disappearance will mean his (Boratong's) being cleared in the cases where I am the witness."

This reporter sought an interview with Boratong, who is being held at the National Bureau of Investigation. But Boratong declined to be interviewed.

With the noncompliance by prosecutors to his Nov. 30 memo, Gonzalez denied the petition filed by Boratong's wife for an early resolution of the case.

But in the Jan. 23 memo, Gonzalez directed the prosecutors handling the Boratong case to "move for the resetting of the scheduled hearing therein on February 1, 2007 to any date in March 2007."

He stated in his latest memo that the justice department needed more time to evaluate Palao's involvement either as an accused or as a witness in the Boratong case.

The memo enumerated the criminal cases against Palao. It referred to him as a "convicted criminal" who does frequent "appearances in the media, claiming to be a star witness against respondent Boratong."

Not a credible witness

"If he is not a credible witness, we can disregard him as a witness," Gonzalez told this reporter.

As of this writing, sources from the PNP-Aidsot said they had not heard of any move by the prosecutors to comply with Gonzalez's directive to seek a postponement of the Feb. 1 hearing.

"Maybe Secretary Gonzalez has forgotten that there are lawyers in the government who have principles and convictions. That's our good luck, and that's the bad luck of Boratong," said a senior police officer involved in the case, requesting anonymity.

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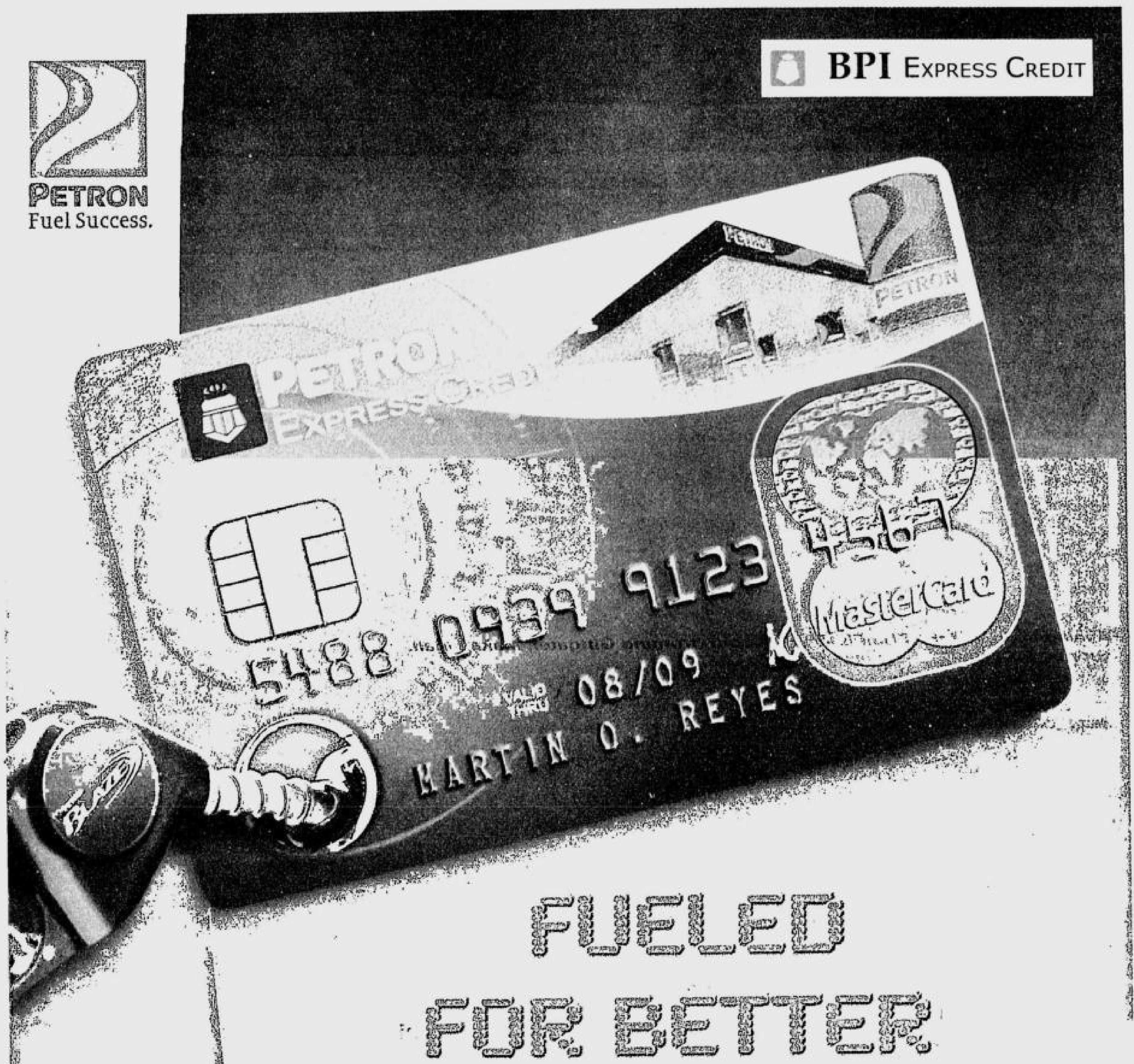

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Indefensible

EDITORIAL

NOTHING RECOMMENDS EX-POLICE GENERAL Hermogenes Ebdane for the position of defense chief—except his unquestioned loyalty to the President. In our view, that is not an asset but a liability. We need a secretary of national defense who is faithful not only to the President but to the military's deepest, longest-term interests. Ebdane, emphatically, is not that man.

In the six years of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's presidency, Ebdane has been nothing but a study in survival. He survived the worst years of the kidnapping crisis, which coincided with his time as chief of the Philippine National Police. He survived the Hello Garci scandal, in particular the allegations that he ran special operations in Mindanao for the President's election campaign in 2004. He has apparently survived his lackluster tenure as public works secretary, at least to the extent that his name is being pushed forward (or he is bold enough to float his own name) as the next secretary of national defense.

Most notoriously, of course, he survived what may be the worst prison escape in Philippine police history: He was PNP chief when Fathur Rahman al-Ghozi, the Jemaah Islamiyah bombmaker, escaped from his detention cell inside Camp Crame, the national police headquarters, on the day Australian Prime Minister John Howard came visiting.

That was a complete debacle; honorable men in similar positions have resigned for lesser reasons, but somehow Ebdane found himself serving until his retirement day, and then being promoted to a crucial Cabinet position. Self-evidently, he is useful to the President.

In the last couple of weeks, he has apparently gotten the right mix of encouraging signals from his principal, and now speaks plainly in public about his desire to assume the post of defense secretary. "I will be a hypocrite if I will say that I do not desire it."

He is encouraged enough to even pick a fight in public. "They want a civilian to head the DND, but there are also a lot of problems in this agency that could only be addressed by someone from the Armed Forces," he said, referring to similar-sounding recommendations from former Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz and the Feliciano Commission. He seems to have forgotten that the recommendations he calls "unfair and biased" are in fact based on the constitutional principle of civilian supremacy.

At the same time, he says he has been out of uniform long enough to qualify as a full-fledged civilian (a rationalization endorsed by that other ex-general-turned-Cabinet-secretary, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita).

Ebdane has also talked in public about the successor he prefers to take over at the Department of Public Works and Highways, discussing "major reorganizations" at the agency and the "several qualifications [required] of a secretary." He told reporters: "I have laid down the parameters for consideration but I will not mention names." This is—when you come to think of it—an extraordinary indulgence for someone who has not officially received his marching orders, unusual even by the standards of brazenness of the Arroyo administration.

If he is indeed the President's choice, then it seems clear that Ms Arroyo has other plans for the defense department. What can Ebdane add to the effort to restore public confidence in the military, when questions about his own role in the Garci scandal continue to linger? What can Ebdane contribute to the full prosecution of the counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism campaigns, when Al-Ghozi's ghost continues to haunt him? What can Ebdane bring to the modernization table, when his appointment is itself a throwback to the pre-modern ways of doing things?

It is unfortunate that, instead of building on the military's recent successes in the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf, the President seems ready to dismantle all that good work by appointing the wrong man to Camp Aguinaldo.

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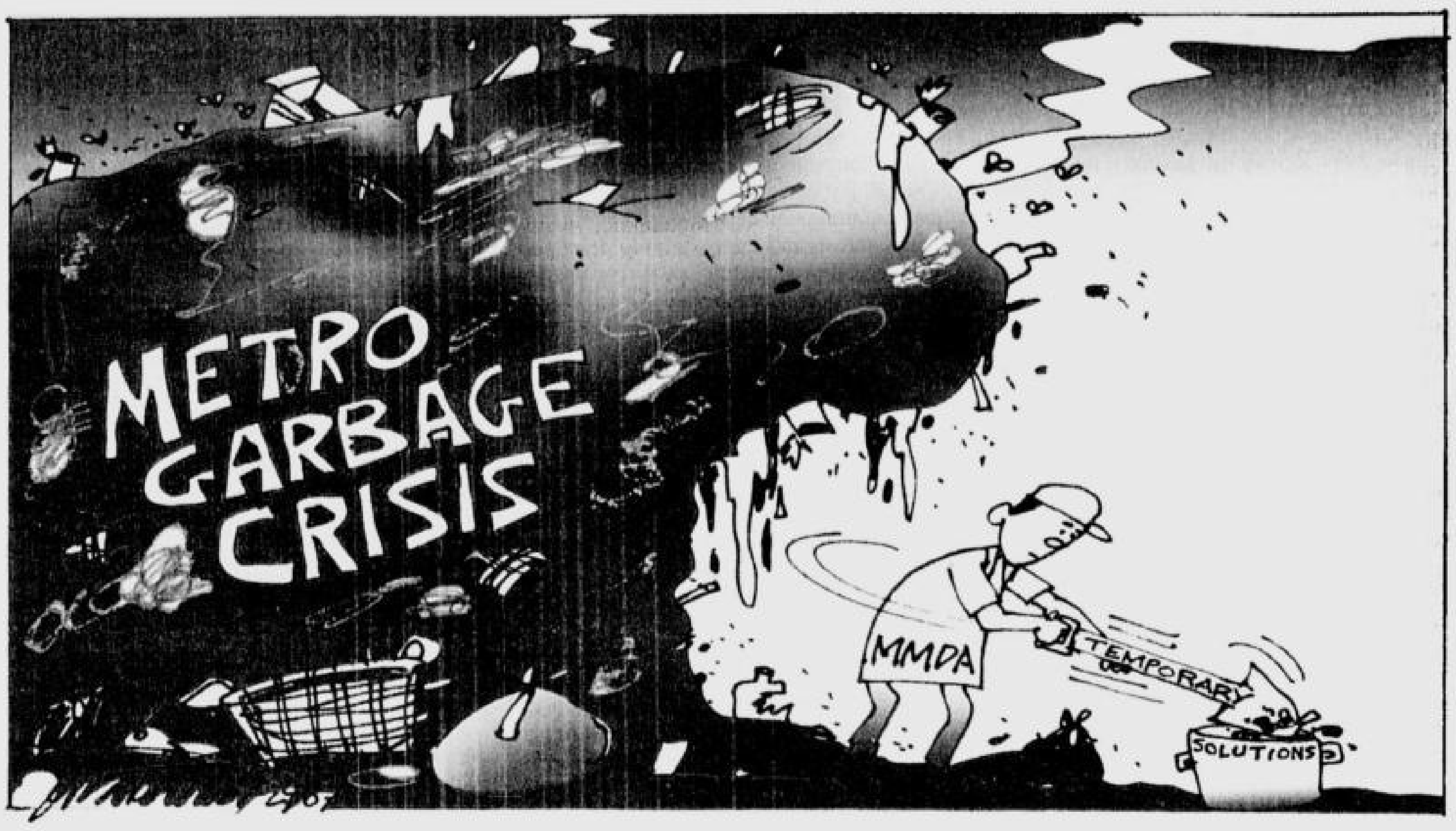

Economic boom? Tell that to the poor

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO SAID IN A speech that Filipinos are enjoying an economic boom, they just don't know it. So the next time a beggar stretched his hand out to me, I stopped and told him: "You are enjoying an economic boom. You just don't know it."

The beggar looked stunned, confused. "What economic boom?" he asked. (The following dialogue took place in Taglish but I translated it into English for the readers.) "The only boom I know is that infernal 'Boom! Tarat tarat' of 'Wowowee.' I went there several times in the hope of being given some money, but a group of toughies told me that if I get any money, I should share half of it with them."

"You don't have to ask for handouts," I said. "The economy is booming so much, everybody will soon be rich. The President said so."

"Really? I've been waiting a long time, but I'm not rich yet."

"Be patient," I said. "If the President says there is an economic boom you better believe it. She doesn't tell many lies."

"What's an economic boom?" he asked. "I know 'boom' means explosion, like what they're having in Mindanao, and also here in Metro Manila from time to time. Those 'booms' are bad. What makes an economic boom good?"

"An economic boom means the economy is improving. Business expands, there are more jobs, people have more money to spend, they have more to eat, they build more homes, they travel, they take vacations, etc."

"Well, I admit I'm on a permanent vacation and I travel a lot, here and there, begging for alms. But jobs, money, food? What are they? I don't have them."

"You must be having them, only you don't know it. The President said so," I said.

"If the President said so, it must be true," he replied. "Presidents don't tell lies, do they?"

"Well, er, er, they're not supposed to, anyway," I said.

"Still, why am I always hungry? Why can't I get a job? Why don't I have any money? Why do I have to sleep on the sidewalk? Why don't I have any home?"

"Hunger is in the mind," I said. "If you convince yourself that you just ate a hearty meal, you won't be hungry."

"I haven't had a hearty meal in years. I don't even know how it feels to have one."

"We'll have a steak dinner tonight," I said.

"Really?" he said licking his lips. "Let's go."

"We'll eat it right here."

"I don't see any steak here."

"Close your eyes," I said. "Pretend that there's a plate of steak in front of you."

He closed his eyes expectantly and waited. "Yes, there's a sizzling steak smothered with onions in front of me," he said finally.

"Now pick up that fork and knife and cut a piece of the steak and put it in your mouth."

His hand closed as if holding a knife and fork and cutting a piece of steak. Then he raised his hand as if putting something in his mouth. He began to chew. A look of happiness fell on his face.

"Eat some more. Here, have some wine," I said.

He began cutting and chewing faster. Every now and then, he gulped wine from an imaginary glass. After a while of chewing and drinking, with that smile of satisfaction on his face, he belched.

"I'm full," he said. "Can I have some dessert?"

"What would you like to have? You can have cake, ice cream, leche flan, grapes, whichever you like."

"Can I have them all?"

The beggar then began spooning ice cream, then leche flan, and then cake into his mouth. "May I have another glass of wine?"

"Go ahead."

He made a big show of slowly drinking a glass of wine. Then he burped again.

"That was the best meal I've had in years," he said.

"See, didn't the President tell you you are enjoying an economic boom, only you don't know it," I said.

"Now I know it," he said. He put his hands in his pockets. "But I still don't have any money."

"That's because you're not earning any. You must have a job," I said.

"That's just it, I can't get a job."

"Maybe you're being choosy."

"If I can have my choice, I would like a job in the Bureau of Customs or the Bureau of Internal Revenue. I will work even without any salary," he said. "But I have tried that already. No vacancy. The applicants are a mile long."

"See, you are being choosy. Every other jobless person wants to work for the BIR and Customs, even for free. Those are the most sought-after jobs in the Philippines."

"I also applied for traffic enforcer."

"Have you ever been a Metro aide?"

"No."

"Well, you have to be a Metro aide before you can become a Metro traffic enforcer."

"I also applied for that, a street sweeper, a garbage collector, a laborer, anything. No dice."

"Maybe, if we do with the job the same game of pretense we played with the steak dinner, we will find a job you like," I suggested.

"That's a good idea," he said. "I'll pretend to be a traffic policeman." He immediately went to the middle of the road and started waving his hands, directing traffic. Traffic flowed smoothly until a jeepney stopped in the middle of the street to load a passenger.

The beggar was upon the driver immediately. "*Bawal magsakay diyan!*" he barked. "*Lisensya!*"

The driver scratched his head. "*Pasyensa ka na, tsip. Naghahanap-buhay lang.*"

"*Pareho lang tayong naghahanap-buhay,*" the beggar replied. "*Lisensya!*"

The driver handed his driver's license. When the beggar opened it, a P50-bill fell. He picked it up.

Just then a real policeman arrived and arrested him. "Pretending to be a cop, huh. Extorting money from drivers, huh. Let's go to the police headquarters."

The last time I saw the beggar, he was being put in a cell full of detainees.

"At least I will have a roof over my head and three square meals a day," he told me as he went inside. "The President is right, we are enjoying an economic boom, only we don't know it."

Absolute terror

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT WE COULD WAKE UP tomorrow in absolute fear for our lives. Courtesy of a government that likes springing nasty surprises on us while we sleep.

That's what's going to happen to us if we allow the current anti-terror bill to pass. It won't stop terror, it will unleash terror. The people standing in its way in the Senate are few, though quite formidable in the strength of their convictions. They include Nene Pimentel and Jamby Madrigal, both of whom have been raising shrill warnings about the new iniquity. As both point out, the anti-terror bill will mount full-blown martial law in this country.

The new terror bill ups the ante on the terrorist methods of fighting terror. Pimentel points out the exceptionally fascistic ones: One, it authorizes the surveillance, interception and recording of messages of suspected terrorists. Two, it allows the arrest without warrant and imprisonment of suspects on the basis of the say-so of anonymous informants and assets. Three, it allows the ironically named law enforcers access to the bank deposits and other property records of suspects. And four, it allows the same ironically named law enforcers to seize those same deposits and assets.

As Pimentel points out, the arrest without warrant of people on the say-so of hooded figures brings us straight back into the days of the Makapili. Well, what can you expect from a Macabebe? Metaphorically that is, she is a daughter of Lubao. But the comparison with the Japanese Occupation is accurate: We are living in similar times, under another Occupation, and with much the same results.

That such an obscenity has no place in a country that pretends to be sane—never mind democratic—is patent. But what makes it even more obscene from where I stand are three things.

First off, all that anti-terror posturing is no better or worse than all the *gaya-gaya*—from Elvis to basketball, from anti-communism to anti-terrorism—we've done with things American. Until George W. Bush took it upon his head to pose as God's avenging sword after 9/11, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo couldn't even spell the word terrorist, she was busy just trying to survive with Erap's loyalists making life miserable for her. Well, the very premises of Bush's anti-terror campaign, which GMA merely imported wholesale along with flour, are now being questioned not just by the world but by America itself. Certainly the American voters have rejected the idiot who spawned it, the one who said idiotically, "You are with me or against me," making the choice an easy one—would anyone in his right mind be for him? Americans have since rediscovered their right minds and turned him into a lame duck in the last elections—as Filipinos will do to GMA this coming May. But the point is clear: This is not fighting terror, this is mounting terror. This is not defending democracy, this is pulverizing democracy.

More than that, the way things are today, we need the kind of anti-terror bill being loosed by GMA and one Ponce Enrile, who shares with GMA a talent for lying—he mounted a fake assassination attempt on himself to justify Marcos' martial law—like a hole in the head. We already have most of the elements of martial law, as it is. We have political activists and journalists being slaughtered with impunity. We have elected local officials being ousted from office on one pretext or another, while the father of all liars, that fellow named Hello Garci, continues to thrive, and will probably become an elected official after May, "elected" in the same way his boss, GMA, got "elected" in 2004. We have dissent and protest being silenced by law and *lokohan*, by corruption and coercion, by madness and murder. Do we want a legal instrument that justifies all that, too?

But still even more than that, look at the utter stupidity, if not monstrosity of it all. Under the new anti-terrorism law, suspected terrorists will have themselves surveilled, will have their conversations tapped, will have their property confiscated, and will languish in jail after being deemed to have committed, or plotted to commit, or being capable of committing acts of terrorism against the citizens of this country.

Well, by God, by Allah, and by your leave, we have someone who has committed an act of breathtaking terrorism against the good citizens of this country, whose guilt has been proven beyond a shadow of doubt by a serendipitous act of official Isafp monitoring (never mind surveillance), but who has not had her property confiscated, who has not had her name entered in the list of the world's most wanted criminals, who is not rotting in the wilds of Muntinlupa, the key to her cell delivered somewhere in the bottom of the Philippine Deep. She is in fact the self-appointed president of this country.

What can be a more terroristic act committed against the citizens of this country than planting a bomb at the heart of their vote? Planting a bomb in a church or schoolhouse doesn't come close to it. What could be more ironclad proof of it than the self-appointed winner of the elections caught on tape, in all the glory or terror of her distinctive, inimitable, DNA-imprinted voice, plotting with a Comelec commissioner not just to steal the vote but also to steal a public school teacher-cum-poll watcher, and to hold up the truth she carries in her heart for ransom? Better to admit as evidence the word of characters with *bayongs* on their faces?

We want to push back terror in this country? We want to stop terror in this country? We want to obliterate terror in this country? Easy.

Just throw the one person guilty as hell of it to the bottom of the Philippine Deep.

The rest is just fomenting terror. Pure, venomous, and absolute terror.

Watching Saddam die

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

THE EXECUTION OF SADDAM HUSSEIN SHOULD bring us to reflect anew on the place of death penalty in our legal system. President Macapagal-Arroyo has vowed that, during her watch, no one will be executed. But the death penalty law is still in our books.

As Judge Munir Haddad told BBC, the execution of Saddam was not a pretty sight. The man was defiant to the end, but those around behaved like beasts themselves. Video shots, stolen with a cell phone camera, recorded an angry exchange between onlookers hurling insults at the prisoner and the prisoner himself turning around to mock his tormentors.

The event took place in a compound known to Americans as Camp Justice, in the Baghdad suburb of Khadimiya where Saddam himself had authorized the execution of many dissidents. The man was in a white shirt and black suit and overcoat, and he was surrounded by men in black ski masks. He had a Koran in his hands.

This is how Judge Haddad described what happened after the sentence was read:

"One of the guards present asked Saddam Hussein whether he was afraid of dying. Saddam's reply was that 'I spent my whole life fighting the infidels and the intruders,' and another guard asked him: 'Why did you destroy Iraq and destroy us? You starved us and you allowed the Americans to occupy us.' His reply was, 'I destroyed the invaders and the Persians, and I destroyed the enemies of Iraq ... and I turned Iraq from poverty into wealth.' He said: 'This is my end ... this is the end of my life. But I started my life as a fighter and as a political militant—so death does not frighten me.'"

After his handcuffs were removed, he was brought to the top of the gallows, his hands tied behind his back and his feet shackled. According to Judge Haddad his last words were: "God is great!" "Down with the Americans!" "Down with the invaders!" "We're going to heaven and our enemies will rot in hell!"

The trap door swallowed him before he could finish his last sentence: "There is no God but Allah, and I testify that Mohammad is the messenger of God. There is no God but Allah and I testify that Mohammad ..."

Judge Haddad concluded: "He was killed instantly and I witnessed the impact of the rope, and it was a horrible sight."

Of course, we try to humanize executions. Death by lethal injection is supposed to be a painless transition to the afterlife. But the heinousness of it is not just in the manner of carrying out the sentence but in the very assault on the human dignity of the person.

In the coming months, our legislators will almost certainly be faced with the challenge of reviewing our law on the subject and with the question of whether the death penalty should be totally removed from our books. Those of them who favor the abolition of the death penalty will be looking for arguments. Of course, there are "secular" reasons for rejecting the death penalty. But I hope that legislators who oppose the death penalty will not be embarrassed to borrow arguments from the teaching of the Christian faith on the value of human life. Even the "secular" reasons are ultimately rooted in our religious belief, in the inalienable dignity of the human person.

Valuable guidance can be found in the moral teachings of the Church on the subject. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the only time Church teaching permits the use of the death penalty is when the "execution of the offender is an absolute necessity," because it is "the only possible way of defending human lives against the unjust aggressor." The teaching goes on to add that such situations are "practically nonexistent."

I cannot think of a possible situation which would make the death penalty the only recourse against aggressors in the Philippines.

Was the execution of Saddam perhaps an example of a situation where the death penalty was an absolute necessity as the only way of defending human lives against unjust aggressors? It might be argued that in the situation of Iraq, it was perfectly possible for a group of insurgents to free Saddam and then restore him to power, especially after a withdrawal of US forces from the country. This possibility, however, has not prevented world leaders, including the Catholic Church, from judging that the execution was a tragic cause for sadness.

It is clear that the execution of Saddam has not put an end to the ongoing violence and killings in Iraq. The aftermath of the execution, together with other events in Iraq, has forced the authorities behind the occupying forces to look for alternative ways of solving the Iraq problem. There is a growing recognition that the continuing disorder in Iraq is the product largely of the manner in which the belligerent occupation is being conducted. Among the issues now being looked into are those that touch on the teaching of the 1907 Hague Regulations and of the 1949 Geneva Convention, and the apparent departures from these by the belligerent occupants.

It is hard to see the execution of Saddam as the path to peace. Nor will executions solve our criminal problems here. As Vatican put it: "The killing of the guilty is not the way to rebuild justice and reconcile society, rather there is a risk of nourishing the spirit of revenge and inciting fresh violence."

Leaders our nation needs

COMMENTARY

Alexander L. Lacson

WHEN GOD DECIDED TO BUILD A NATION FOR His people, He didn't call upon them as a whole. Instead, He called on one person—Abraham—to do the job, and He made him the leader. When God wanted to deliver His people from the bondage of slavery in Egypt, He didn't talk to the people as a whole. Instead, He raised one leader—Moses—to do it. When He wanted His people to cross the wilderness on to the Promised Land—God appointed Joshua.

In the Bible, each time God wanted to do something great, He always called on one person—one whom He molded to become a leader—to do the task.

But in our times, God no longer speaks directly to man the way He did during the times in the Old Testament. Today, God speaks to us indirectly—through the signs and subtle messages He sends our way.

Today, leaders are elected by the people. Every election, therefore, becomes a call to leadership. While many run for money and power, there are those who run because they feel it is their calling to serve the people. But often, it is difficult to differentiate one candidate from another.

This brings me to the point—what should we look for in a candidate? What kind of leaders does our nation need today?

Lao Tzu, a famous Chinese philosopher, said—"In choosing a leader, character is the most important quality. Intelligence and skills come second in importance." US President Theodore Roosevelt said that "intelligence without morality is a great danger to society."

Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest leaders mankind has ever produced, said—"Power is best used by a leader who has strong moral character." Plato said "He who does not seek power is the most qualified to hold it."

Park Chung-hee, president of South Korea from 1961 to 1979—in his desire to build a good government in his country—used **honesty** as the first criteria in appointing leaders and officials to government. When he died in 1979, he left a government that was highly credible in the eyes of its people, and an economy that became one of Asia's economic miracles. Despite serving as his nation's leader for 18 years, President Park died a poor man in 1979, with little money in the bank, and left only one property to his family—an old, small apartment that he and his wife bought in 1961, before he was installed as president.

In early 19th century, Alexander de Tocqueville, a French statesman, sought to understand America's greatness, and this is what he discovered, in his own words.

"I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there....

"I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her public school system and her institutions of learning, and it was not there.

"I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her democratic congress and her matchless constitution, and it was not there.

"Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with **righteousness** did I understand the secret of her genius and greatness.

"America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

My dear countrymen, please let us make moral character—or righteousness—as our first criteria in voting for candidates this May 2007 elections. It is our obligation to do so. Aristotle said, "The salvation of the community (nation) should be the common business of good citizens."

Today, more than ever, our country needs leaders who cannot be bought; whose word is their bond; who put character above wealth; who will be honest in small things as in great things; who will make no compromises with wrong; whose ambitions are not confined to their own selfish desires. (With apologies to Charles Swindoll who penned "The World Needs Men.")

Leaders who, by their love for our country, can unite us Filipinos, wherever we may be in this archipelago or in the world, whatever our religions are, whether we are loyalists of Marcos, Cory or Erap.

Leaders who, by their sincerity and humility, can bring out the best in us as a people, so we may discard the indifference and selfishness among our rich, the despair and lack of spirit among our poor, the greed and ambition among our leaders.

Leaders who can inspire our entire nation to work as one to do great things, including sacrifices, for the good of our nation.

Leaders who value honor, whose word is their bond, whose oath of office their commitment. Leaders who cannot be bought, who will be honest in small things and in great things.

Leaders whose stand on right and wrong is as clear as black and white, whose principles and values are beyond the reach of money, who are brave and bold to do what is right.

Leaders whose love of country is greater than love for one's self and family, and who shall be willing to march into hell so that the Filipinos may have heaven on this planet.

Leaders like Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Mahatma Gandhi, David Ben Gurion, Lee Kuan Yew and Park Chung-hee. For the stories of these men—considered as fathers of their nations today—all point to one clear truth: that the task of building a nation begins in the heart.

Alexander L. Lacson, is author of the bestseller book "12 Little Things Every Filipino Can Do To Help Our Country." A lawyer by profession, he finished law at UP and has taken post graduate studies at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

Missing the overseas vote

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

RECENTLY THE INQUIRER REPORTED THAT around 1,000 domestic helpers and their recruiters held a rally in front of the Philippines' Department of Labor and Employment. The protesters, organized by a consortium of 700 recruitment agencies, "aired their objections to the raising of the maids' minimum wage to $400, the setting of the minimum age at 25, and mandatory training for all applicants." It's not the first time that Filipinos wanting to work abroad have had to rally to air their grievances. A couple of years ago, even before the Japanese government—under American pressure—moved to impose limits on Filipino entertainers going to Japan, once-and-future Japayukis rallied in front of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), which had announced it was requiring stricter regulations for the issuance of the coveted (because necessary for departure) artists record book (ARB) certificates.

That the rally represented the flexing of what should be the overseas Filipino worker's political muscle is devoutly to be wished. But so far, aside from the periodic junkets of Filipino politicians (more for local consumption, to reassure relatives at home that their breadwinners are getting attention abroad), only the Philippine Left has tried to organize overseas Filipinos on a systematic basis.

Juan Mercado, on the same day the protest story came out, observed in his column that "Filipino overseas workers bought a quarter of the lots sold by big real estate firms in 2006, up from 15 percent last year." Besides the many jobs—in sales, advertising, management, construction and so on—such investments create, they have many other significant, and political, benefits for the country.

The OFW who finally buys a home not only obtains security for his family but also gains a tremendous incentive to ensure that his home somehow increases in value—which will only happen if neighborhoods are safe, municipalities are better-run and so on down the line. At present, the immense number of Filipinos living illegally on other people's land makes them pawns in the hands of candidates who can threaten them with expulsion, or coddle them in exchange for votes—one reason Gawad Kalinga has the potential of making a revolutionary impact.

I've felt for some time that this new, emerging middle class can radically transform society and government. But it has to realize, as a whole, something a growing number of Filipinos have come to appreciate. That if they are employed, are providing for their families and securing a tangible improvement in their own and their families' lives (better schooling for their kids, actual homes, even a business to retire on), it's because of their own hard work and not what the Philippine government has done.

The best that the government has been able to do—on both sides of the political aisle, administration and opposition—is to try to flatter overseas Filipinos while making sure they don't enter the political equation. For Speaker Jose de Venecia (a veteran, incidentally, of Philippine efforts to send laborers to Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Middle East), there was little he could actually promise overseas Filipinos. All he could do was promise an OFW representative a leadership position in the Lakas-CMD party. More of the usual home-grown patronage, in other words.

The problem is that the proposals to "reform" Philippine politics ignore the huge electorate that, until very recently, was suffering from taxation without representation; and which, having gained a limited vote (only for national officials) was going to be stripped of it. Even in OFW circles, I found limited enthusiasm for an idea I had hoped they'd propose, something that the Italians have done. The Italian Senate reserves seats for representatives of overseas Italians. We often hear of how ridiculous a nationally elected Senate has become, and suggestions to restore a regionally elected upper house. What about an internationally elected one? But no dice, even from OFWs.

I once heard of an OFW community that was up in arms because its members were invited to the Philippine Embassy, only to discover that the attendance sheet they had been asked to sign, was sent home to Manila as a "manifesto of support" for the administration. But that was the end of it—and will always be the end of it, until any administration realizes it has to attend to OFWs year-round—not just order up brass bands and hand out prizes when workers return home for the holidays.

An entrepreneur I recently talked to told me, Philippine officialdom has turned mulcting our OFWs into a science. They are squeezed dry for permit fees, forced to submit to placement agencies either government-run or well-connected with the government, with exclusive rights to deploy to certain places—which means corruption both at home and abroad for the officials concerned. Where is the financial credit to keep OFWs from being buried in debt before they've even left? And where are the efforts to keep their families and homes safe? Where, in a word, is the quid for all the quo, quo, quo government demands? It's nowhere, the entrepreneur angrily said, not even in the promises of the politicians.

And yet you'd expect a Filipino overseas community of over 10 million-strong to put the fear of the electorate in any candidate. But when the Comelec, for example, announced OFWs can vote online in May, one of them found out about it only because I had blogged it. Which means many more will never know. And there lies the lost democratic potential.

Is Iran next?

WORLD VIEW

Joschka Fischer

CAN POLITICS LEARN FROM HISTORY? OR IS IT SUBJECT to a fatal compulsion to repeat the same mistakes, despite the disastrous lessons of the past? President George W. Bush's new strategy for Iraq has posed anew this age-old philosophical and historical question.

Ostensibly, President Bush has embarked on a new political and military strategy for war-torn Iraq. Bush's new course can be summarized under three headings: more American troops, more Iraqi responsibility and more US training for more Iraqi troops.

If you apply this new plan to Iraq alone, two things immediately catch the eye: almost all the proposals of the Baker-Hamilton report have been ignored, and the plan itself—in the face of the chaos in Iraq—is quite simplistic. In light of the failure of all previous "new strategies" for stabilizing Iraq, there is little to suggest that the newest "new strategy" will succeed any better, despite the additional 21,000 US soldiers.

What is interesting and really new in the US administration's recently announced policy is the way it reaches beyond Iraq, to deal with Iran, Syria and the Gulf states. Here, unexpected and genuinely new decisions have been announced: an additional US aircraft carrier group will be moved to the Persian Gulf; Patriot anti-aircraft missiles will be stationed in the Gulf states; and the additional 21,000 soldiers far exceed what the American generals had asked for to deal with Iraq. So one wonders about the purpose of this military build-up? One might almost think that Saddam Hussein was still alive and in power, so his overthrow had to be prepared all over again.

The surprise of Bush's new policy is its shift of political focus—from Iraq to its two immediate neighbors. Bush accuses Syria and Iran of interfering in Iraq, threatening its territorial integrity and endangering American troops and, more generally, of seeking to undermine America's allies in the region. If you add to this the seizure, on President Bush's orders, of Iranian "diplomats" by US forces in the northern Iraqi town of Erbil, a completely new picture of the President's plan comes to the fore: the "new strategy" does not follow the advice of the Baker-Hamilton report, but harks back to the disastrous strategy of the neo-cons. Iran is now in the superpower's sights, and the US approach brings to mind the preparatory phase of the Iraq war—down to the last detail.

Where does all this lead? Basically, there are two possibilities, one positive and one negative. Unfortunately, the positive outcome appears to be the less likely one.

If the threat of force—a force that the United States is quite obviously building—aims at preparing the ground for serious negotiations with Iran, there can and should be no objection. If, on the other hand, it represents an attempt to prepare the American public for a war against Iran, and a genuine intention to unleash such a war when the opportunity arises, the outcome would be an unmitigated disaster.

Unfortunately, this danger is all too real. Since the Bush administration views Iran's nuclear program and hegemonic aspirations as the major threat to the region; its new strategy is based on a newly formed undeclared anti-Iranian alliance with moderate Sunni Arab states and Israel. The nuclear program is the dynamic factor here, because it will set a timeline for action.

But air strikes on Iran, which America may see as a military solution, would not make Iraq safer; they would achieve exactly the opposite. Nor would the region as a whole be stabilized; on the contrary, it would be plunged into an abyss. And the dream of "regime change" in Tehran would not come true, either; rather, Iran's democratic opposition would pay a high price, and the theocratic regime would only become stronger.

The political options for stabilizing Iraq and the whole region, as well as for securing a long-term freeze of Iran's nuclear program, have not yet been exhausted. The current state of Iran's nuclear program does not call for immediate military action. Instead, the focus should be on diplomatic efforts to detach Syria from Iran and isolate the Tehran regime. But this presupposes American willingness to return to diplomacy and talk to all the parties involved. Tehran is afraid of regional and international isolation. Moreover, the recent municipal elections in Iran have shown that betting on diplomacy and a transformation of Iran from within is a realistic option. So why the current threats against Iran?

The debacle in Iraq was foreseeable from the beginning, and America's numerous partners and friends predicted it quite clearly in their warnings to the Bush administration. The mistake that the United States may be about to make is equally predictable: a war that is wrong will not be made right by extending it—that is the lesson of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The ideologically driven strategy of regime change by means of military force led America into the Iraq war disaster. Getting into Iraq and defeating Saddam was easy. But today, America is stuck there and knows neither how to win nor how to get out. A mistake is not corrected by repeating it over and over. Perseverance in error does not correct the error; it merely exacerbates it. Following the launch of the new American policy, the old question of whether politics can learn from history will be answered again in the Middle East. Whatever the answer, the consequences—whether good or bad—will be far-reaching. ***Project Syndicate/Institute for Human Sciences***

Joschka Fischer was Germany's foreign minister and vice chancellor from 1998 to 2005. A leader in the Green Party for nearly 20 years, he is now a visiting professor at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School.

THEY SAID

In to win

"I'm in and I'm in to win."

—Hillary Clinton announcing her bid for the US presidency

Borderless world

"With this globalization going on, the world is now without borders. You have to go out now, unlike when there were too many barriers."

—Alfredo Yao, whose company Zest-O Corp. is in talks to buy a Dubai-based firm

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Where is justice in our apathy?

BUT WHERE IS JUSTICE WHEN the poor cannot go to school because of their poverty, when education is a right, not a privilege?

But where is justice when a poor man is denied admission to a government hospital because he cannot put up a deposit?

But where is justice when the government is apathetic and indifferent to the growing number of beggars roaming our streets?

But where is justice when the government violently disperses a peaceful demonstration of workers who are only clamoring for wage increase?

But where is justice when the government sides with the rich in land disputes, authorizing the police to demolish the crumbling homes of the poor?

But where is justice when people who are critical of government excesses and abuses are silenced through extrajudical killings?

But where is justice when the government taxes the poor more while taxing the rich less?

But where is justice when in the midst of degrading poverty, government officials continue to live a lavish lifestyle?

But where is justice when the government favors the rich over the poor in the administration of justice? When the innocent poor are easily convicted and the guilty rich are immediately exonerated?

But where is justice when vast tracts of lands are being used for recreational purposes while many of our people do not have lands to till or to build their homes on?

But where is justice when for every meeting or convention, government officials choose the best hotels and most expensive food at the expense of the poor?

But where is justice when there is unequal distribution of wealth, when the majority poor are given a pittance while the minority rich enjoy the lion's share?

But where is justice when our country's wealth is continuously siphoned off into the coffers of multinational corporations?

But where is justice when the government which is tasked to promote the common good espouses instead the interests of the affluent few?

But where is justice when the government surrenders its national sovereignty to please a foreign government?

But where is justice when the truth of the controversial 2004 presidential elections is kept hidden?

And finally, where is justice when we the citizens who are aware of these injustices are unperturbed and unaffected, timid to act as if it were beyond our power to right the wrong?

And so injustice continues to dwell in our land, and to victimize…

—RUFINO PEPOYE CABATINGAN,
San Isidro Labrador Parish,
Naawan, Misamis Oriental

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LETTERS

No major fraud in Legazpi polls

AS THE CITIZENS' ARM ACCREDITED by the Commission on Elections to watch over the conduct of voting and the counting of votes in all the precincts in Albay during the May 2004 elections, PPCRV-Namfrel Albay would like to react to the column of Neal Cruz titled "Is SC sitting on election case in Legazpi?" (PDI, 1/22/07)

The actual voting, as a whole, was free from major and organized irregularities or fraud. The watchers of both sides, as well as those of national parties, were vigilant and diligent; they asked for their respective copies of the election returns. Namfrel precinct volunteers also asked for their copies to bring these to Namfrel "tabulation centers," which were open to the public. Our counting reached 98.46 percent of all the precincts in Legazpi City. For the position of mayor, Noel Rosal got 43,417 votes while Michael Imperial had 32,801 votes.

Our results were not 100-percent complete and they were unofficial. The Comelec is the only one that can give the official results of the election, but our figures and data can be made as a reference in proceedings in case there is a serious doubt on the election results.

The PPCRV-Namfrel has no institutional or political interest in the election. Our mission is to make sure that the votes of the people are counted and that their voice is heard, and to help maintain the integrity of every election in our nation.

—JOHN B. ABEJURO,
provincial coordinator,
PPCRV-Namfrel Albay,
c/o Social Action Center,
St. Gregory Cathedral Compound,
Legazpi City

Picop has only itself to blame for DENR's withdrawal of its TLA

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO DOmingo Tumambing's letter which criticized my withdrawal of Picop's logging concession in Mindanao, a decision upheld by the Supreme Court on Nov. 29, 2006. He said that:

1. I denied Picop the area because I wanted "to convert 8,100 hectares for mining." On my recommendation, President Macapagal-Arroyo declared on Nov. 25, 2002 the Mt. Diwalwal gold rush area a mineral reservation. We organized 24 small-scale mining cooperatives that allowed for a fairer profit-sharing scheme in favor of the small miners. Mine tailings pollution was to be managed through the Mabatas dam. For the first time in 20 years, government collected taxes and stopped unmitigated violence in the area.

Southeast Mindanao (SEM) Gold Mining Corp., a sister company of Picop, claimed mining rights in Mt. Diwalwal by virtue of an Exploration Permit belonging to Marcopper Mining. But on June 23, 2006, the high court ruled that Marcopper's mineral claim was a privilege, not a vested property right that could be transferred to another company.

2. I "issued five Ifmas for 169,000 hectares."

This is a project that will cover denuded forests in the Agusan provinces. The project will use Finnish technology to rehabilitate forests and harvest clean alternative power. New Zealand and Finland, serving as the project's stewards, signed an agreement to guarantee the integrity of the contract. This project was adopted during President Arroyo's Sept. 11, 2006 state visit to Finland.

3. We "converted 660 hectares of forests for residential and/or commercial use."

The environment secretary has no power to convert forest areas for residential use. The conversion was proposed by the 40,000-strong gold rush barangay community. They lacked decent housing and lived in hovels at the mouths of the mining pits.

4. I "awarded 3,400 hectares as CBFM areas."

The CBFMs in question were granted by a predecessor. The government adopted the CBFM program to contain the destructive *kaingin* farming.

5. That I "granted 17,112 hectares CADC to the indigenous communities."

The claims were established by the Manobos before I became the environment secretary. What I ordered Picop to do was to obtain the consent from the Manobos in the area, before starting any logging activities within their ancestral domain. This is in accordance with the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (Ipra).

For the record, the Supreme Court cited "so glaring" pieces of evidence of "Picop's noncompliance with the requirements of conversion" (including non-payment of P167 million in charges). It also censured Picop: "The courts should not condone such blatant disregard by those who believe they are above the law because of their sizable investments and significant number of workers employed. Picop has only itself to blame for the withholding of the conversion of its TLA."

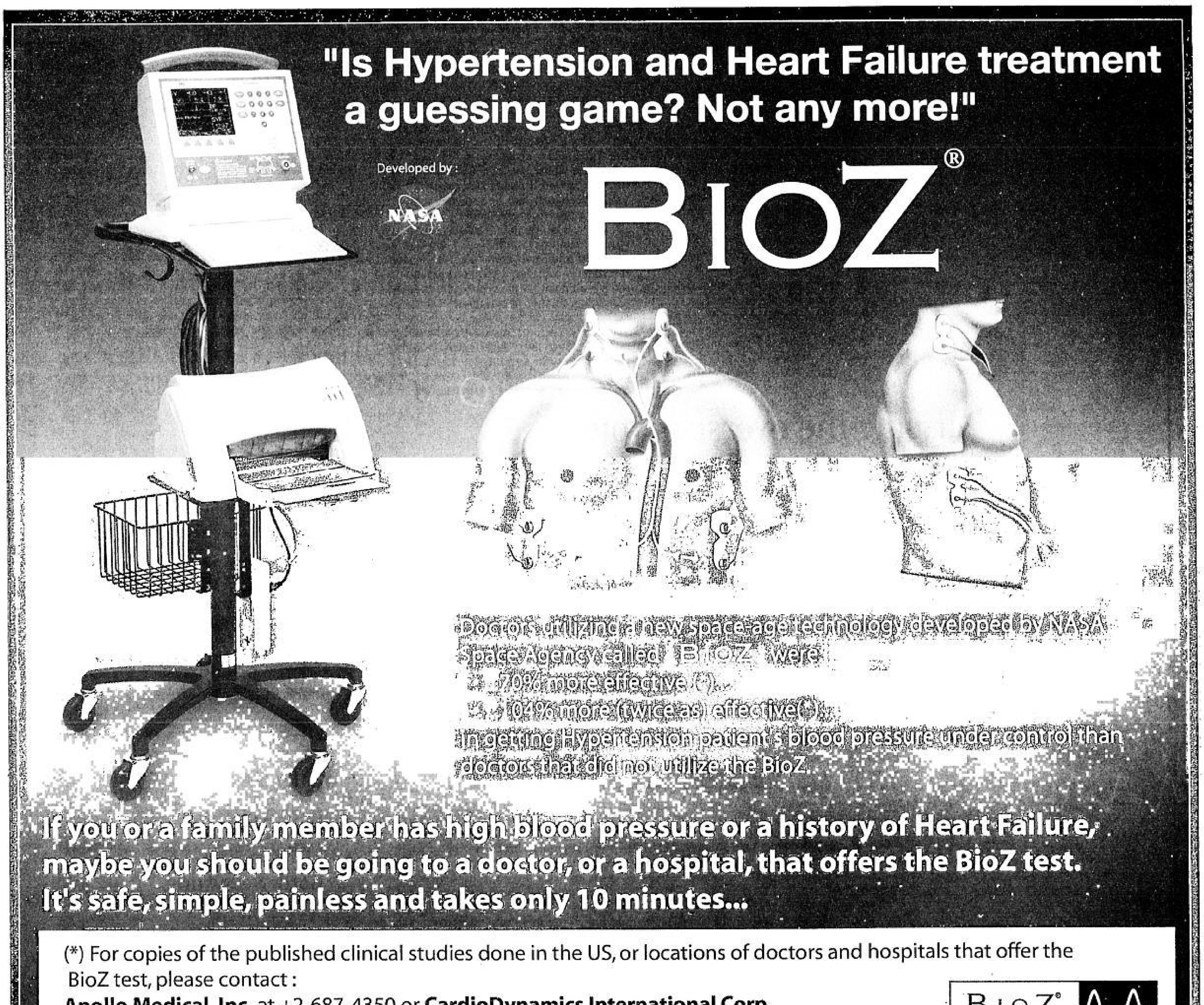
—HEHERSON T. ALVAREZ,
former environment secretary,
www.hehersonalvarez.com

To keep the poor ignorant

I THINK THOSE IN POWER IN the Philippines are intentionally not doing their duty to improve the quality of education in the country

They want to keep the majority of the Filipinos, specifically the poor, to remain ignorant and uneducated. This way, they will remain in power.

—PJ MORALES,
pjagnesdk@cox.net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Philippine Society of Hypertension &
Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society
JOINT 12TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

January 31 - February 2, 2007
Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, Quezon City

Theme: "Decision-making in Hypertension and Dyslipidemia Prevention and Intervention in Specific Populations"

Senator Edgardo J. Angara
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Nelson S. Abelardo
President
Philippine Society of Hypertension

Dr. Ruby T. Go
President
Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society

Joint confab focuses on clinical decision-making

Senator Angara keynotes opening ceremonies

Hypertension and dyslipidemia experts, and all others interested in these fields of cardiovascular medicine, will again convene for the 12th joint annual convention of the Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH) and the Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society (PLAS). The annual convention is slated on January 31 to February 2, 2007 at the Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila.

Senator Edgardo J. Angara will give the keynote speech during the opening ceremonies on January 31, Wednesday, at 9 am. Sen. Angara is the longest serving senator in the post-EDSA Senate, and was the head of this august chamber from 1993-1995. He has established a reputation as a resolute reformer and firm leader, winning praise for his non-confrontational stance on contentious domestic and international issues, while building consensus at the same time.

Among the many laws he has sponsored are the Senior Citizens Act (or The Angara Law) that allows the elderly to avail of substantial discounts when buying medicine or availing of healthcare services; and the National Health Insurance Act, or PHILHEALTH, that provides financial assistance to every citizen when they get confined in a hospital.

This year, the scientific program of the joint confab focuses on the decision-making process involved in the prevention and control of hypertension and dyslipidemia in specific populations such as the old, the young and patients at-risk at the workplace.

"The scientific committee has developed a program that will address the issues confronting us. It is our way of staying relevant by bringing to fore the pertinent issues ever mindful that the facts and figures presented, will eventually be applied in the practical arena of the clinics and hospitals," says Dr. Nelson Abelardo, PSH president.

Among the pertinent issues which will be discussed during the convention is how to find the balance between hypertension guidelines and the real clinical settings. The issue whether current clinical studies on metabolic syndrome are appropriate to actual patient population will also be debated on. The highly informative and interactive program consists of three plenary lectures, 10 symposia, one debate and at least ten additional satellite symposia organized by participating pharmaceutical companies.

A Lay Forum with top experts in hypertension and dyslipidemia or cholesterol problems as resource persons will also be conducted as a pre-convention event on January 28 (Sunday) 1-5 pm, also at the Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila. Patients and those with risk factors for atherosclerosis like hypertension, dyslipidemia, diabetes, obesity, smoking, strong family history and excessive stress, can benefit from this forum. Registration is free for this forum but participants have to preregister since seats are limited.

A special part of the convention is the presentation of the research projects supported by either the PSH or PLAS and the awarding of recognition to some of these works through the PSH-Therapharma Yolando QM Sulit Young Investigators Award and PLAS-Pfizer Lipid Award.

	January 28 Sunday		January 31 Wednesday	February 1 Thursday	February 2 Friday
7:00					
7:30					PSH BUSINESS MEETING Ballroom D/E
7:45		REGISTRATION			
8:15				PRESENTATION OF THE PSH & PLAS SUPPORTED RESEARCH WORKS	PLAS BUSINESS MEETING Ballroom D/E
8:45			OPENING CEREMONIES OPENING OF EXHIBITS Ballroom A	PLENARY SESSION 2 Managing the Epidemic of Risk Factors Leading to Chronic Kidney Disease *Dr. Lynn C. Almazan-Gomez* Ballroom A	PLENARY SESSION 3 The Interplay of Hypertension, Dyslipidemia and the Aging Process in Dementia *Dr. Abdias V. Aquino* Ballroom A
9:30				COFFEE BREAK / VISIT THE EXHIBITS	
10:00			PLENARY SESSION 1 Risk Stratification in Hypertension and Dyslipidemia *Dr. Elizabeth T. Paz-Pacheco* Ballroom A	2007 PSH-THERAPHARMA Y.Q.M. SULIT YOUNG INVESTIGATOR'S AWARD Ballroom A	COFFEE BREAK / VISIT THE EXHIBITS
10:15					CS - 8 Hypertension: Finding the Balance Between the Guidelines and the Realities in the Local Setting Ballroom A CS - 9 The Big and Small, High and Low in Vascular Medicine Ballroom B
11:00			2007 PLAS-PFIZER LIPID AWARD Ballroom A		
12:00			LUNCH SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM		
12:30	LAY FORUM		1 Therapharma Ballroom A 2 Pfizer Ballroom B	1 Therapharma 2 Pfizer 3 Sanofi-Aventis	1 MSD Ballroom A 2 Westfield Ballroom B
1:30			COFFEE BREAK / VISIT THE EXHIBITS		
1:45			POSTER DISCUSSIONS	CS - 5 Stroke in Various Settings Ballroom A CS - 6 Hypertension: Issues in Specific Populations	DEBATE "Are the current clinical studies on Metabolic Syndrome appropriate to the actual patient population?"
2:15			CS - 1 The Young: The New Segment of the Aging Population (I) Ballroom A CS - 3 The Endocrine Aspects of Cardiovascular Diseases Ballroom B		
2:45					ORIENTATION OF THE INDUCTEES AS HYPERTENSION SPECIALIST Ballroom D/E
3:45			COFFEE BREAK / VISIT THE EXHIBITS		
4:00			CS - 2 The Young: The New Segment of the Aging Population (II) Ballroom A CS - 4 Health Initiatives that Work in the Working Population	LATE BREAKING TRIALS • ADOPT • DREAM • ASTEROID • PREVAIL Ballroom A CS - 7 Building Partnerships and Networks in the Prevention and Care of CV Diseases Ballroom B	CS - 10 On Oils and Fatty Acids: Towards Securing a Steadier Stand on the Slippery Issues Ballroom B
5:45				DINNER SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM 3 Therapharma Ballroom A	CLOSING CEREMONIES and INDUCTION OF HYPERTENSION SPECIALISTS Ballroom A
6:00			DINNER SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM 1 GSK Ballroom A DINNER SATELLITE SYMPOSIUM 2 Pharmalink		
7:00					

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Dengue kills 3, downs 15 in Laguna

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA—THREE RESIDENTS OF A SUBDIvision here, including a youngster, died while 15 others were hospitalized after a dengue outbreak struck their neighborhood in Barangay San Antonio here, officials said Sunday.

A municipal health officer, who asked not to be identified as his agency had yet to release its official report, said the victims were residents of Camella Woodhills subdivision.

He said the victims suffered high fever and subsequently died while being treated at a public hospital.

The 15 other victims were brought to a hospital in nearby Muntinlupa City.

"We had a hard time confirming the deaths as officials of the homeowners association in the area apparently tried to hide the incident," the INQUIRER source said.

He said the victims were afflicted with the disease last week and died a few days later.

Dr. Alsaneo Lagos, Laguna provincial health officer, confirmed that there was a dengue outbreak in the area.

He, however, could not give the names of the victims.

Lagos said he had already sent a team of health officials to investigate the incident and immediately launch countermeasures to contain the outbreak.

He said they had started fogging the area and distributed larvaecide to kill the deadly mosquitoes that caused the disease.

He said they were continuing to conduct discussions in the community to teach them how to keep the area safe from dengue mosquitoes and started the "Brigada Kontra Kiti-kiti" campaign.

In Bohol, a private medical practitioner in Loon town cautioned residents not to lower their guards despite the reduction in the number of people affected by diarrhea outbreak in this town.

"I told my patients and people I talk to not to stop boiling water they use for drinking, washing kitchenware and even their hands," said Dr. Lloyd Peter Lopez, the town mayor's brother who runs a private clinic here.

Lopez said that while the number of people seeking treatment in government hospitals and in his clinic has diminished, it is still too early to declare the threat over.

He also observed that many residents no longer sought treatment from physicians when they felt the symptoms but merely buy medicines prescribed to their neighbors.

The municipal government of Loon has declared the town in a state of calamity after two people died and 400 others were downed by gastrointestinal disorders in the last week.

Two of the fatalities were identified as Lea Mae Lampara, 3, and Paz Marson, 58. Lampara died at the Loon District Hospital (LDH) while Marson expired at the Gov. Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital (CGMH) in Tagbilaran City, both on Tuesday. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon and Chito Fuentes, Inquirer Visayas*

STRAFED HOUSE LEONCIO BALBIN JR./NORTHERN LUZON

Dolores, Abra town mayor Albert Guzman inspects his house at Zone 7, Bangued, Abra the house was strafed by unidentified gunmen. Police recovered 96 empty shells of M-14 and M-16 armalite riffles. The house was strafed last month, two days after the slaying of slain Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin and his bodyguard.

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PNP, Army urge Comelec to rush gun ban exemption processing

LUCENA CITY—POLICE AND MILITARY INtelligence operatives who often perform their duties in civilian clothes to remain incognito appealed to the Commission on Elections to speed up the processing of their applications for gun ban exemption.

"It's hard for law enforcers like us to effectively perform our duties without our service firearms. Its dangerous. We also don't want ourselves to be caught in a situation where we will be arrested for violating the gun ban in the performance of our duties," a local policeman who is into intelligence work told the INQUIRER.

His colleagues in the local police force, who all requested anonymity, echoed the same appeal to the Comelec.

The restive lawmen cited the reported arrest of two Bicol policemen for gun ban violations. "We don't want that incident to happen to us," said one policeman.

Exemption permits

On Tuesday, the National Bureau of Investigation in Bicol arrested two policemen in civilian clothes while turning over a person accused of rape. The policemen did not have the Comelec exemption permits allowing them to carry guns.

One veteran senior policeman assigned at the Quezon provincial headquarters recalled that in past elections, the Comelec usually issued exemption permits during the last stretch of the campaign period.

"That Comelec permit is a big joke then. Hopefully, it will be different this time. Our men in the field needed that permit because they are law enforcers and not lawbreakers," said the senior police source.

"Without their service firearms, they are exposed naked to criminals and communist Sparrows," said the official.

Army intelligence operatives assigned at the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar expressed the same sentiment.

"We want Comelec officials to know our tight situation. We don't want ourselves to be exposed in a Comelec checkpoint just because our service firearms don't have the required exemption permit," said a junior military officer who also requested anonymity.

But it was observed that even without the Comelec exemption permits, police and military also carry their firearms even when in civilian clothes. "*Pakisamahan na lang. Huhulihin ba ng pulis ang kapuwa nila pulis dahil lang sa* gun ban?" said one cop.

The poll body started implementing the ban last Jan. 14 and will last until June 13 as mandated under the Omnibus Election Code.

Unlawful

Comelec Resolution 7764-A stated that it is unlawful for any person to bear, carry or transport firearms or deadly weapons, unless they secure an exemption from the poll body.

Unless they are in uniform, the poll body also prohibits policemen and military from carrying their firearms when not in duty and outside of military camps.

The Comelec has received more than 20,000 applications for gun ban exemptions, most of them from the military and the police.

But as of Tuesday, the poll body has so far reportedly approved only 3,500 applications.

The poll body is expecting a rise in the number of applicants next month with the start of the campaign period for senatorial candidates on Feb. 13.

Violators of the gun ban face the cancellation of their right to vote and to seek elective posts, imprisonment and a fine. *Delfin Mallari Jr. Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Tuguegarao folk angry at girl's slay

TUGUEGARAO CITY—RESIDENTS AND OFficials in this city were outraged over the murder of a 15-year-old girl last week, whose body was found near the Catholic cemetery here.

Police said the body of Judy Ann Bunagan, 15, a sophomore student of the Cagayan National High School, bore at least 24 stab and hack wounds when it was found on Jan. 24 at the Tuguegarao Catholic Cemetery in Barangay Pengue Ruyu.

City police chief Supt. Reynaldo Sinaong said they have yet to arrest a suspect but have questioned at least eight people who saw Bunagan before she was killed.

Police said Bunagan was last seen having a drinking session with three men and another girl in Barangay Pengue Ruyu.

Sinaong said the police have recovered two bolos believed used in the killing and a tricycle where bloodstains have been found. Bunagan's cellular phone, however, was missing.

Mayor Randolph Ting and lawyer Raymund Guzman, president of the Parents-Teachers Community Association of CNHS, have condemned the killing.

"There is too much crime in the city. We have bag and cell phone snatching and unsolved killings. We have a curfew ordinance and I cannot understand why there are still minors on the streets even at midnight," said Guzman.

Callers to several radio programs here last week expressed outrage and concern over the murder of Bunagan.

In January 2004, residents aired similar concerns when Dinaroe Ancheta, also a high school student, was found dead here. Two suspects, whom police said were drug addicts, were detained for Ancheta's murder.

Sinaong assured residents that the police were doing their best to solve Bunagan's killing. He said they were waiting for the results of laboratory examinations on the blood samples recovered from the bolos and tricycle.

Bunagan's parents said they would not bury their daughter until the police arrested and filed charges against the suspects. *Estanislao Caldez, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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Typhoon survivors turn to Internet for help

THE ROOFLESS Mulanay Institute

DELFIN MALLARI, JR. / INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

LUCENA CITY—DESPERATE FOR funds to rehabilitate their badly damaged town of Mulanay, which was severely hit by successive typhoons last year, local officials have turned to the Internet to reach out to town mates abroad.

In the website of "Mga Mulanayins" (http://mulanayin-global.org), Mayor Prudencio Maxino Jr. appealed to expatriates for assistance for the town's rehabilitation.

"I am appealing to our *kababayan* (town mates) abroad to extend a helping hand by way of valuable donations to alleviate the plight of our grieving Mulanayins," the mayor wrote in an open letter, a copy of which was posted in the website.

The website has long been administered by Edwin Luna, a Mulanay native who is now based in Chicago, to foster strong ties among Mulanayins living abroad and to bridge the gap back home.

Maxino said the estimated typhoon damage in the town reached P200 million.

Students of the town's public school, which was severely damaged by the typhoons, also turned to the website for help.

"With all humility, we, the administration, parents, students, faculty and staff of Mulanay Institute, express our appeal to your generous heart to rebuild our school which was partially damaged by typhoons Milenyo and Reming in just a span of three months," Jean Myreen Rivera, president of the Mulanay Institute Student Council, said in a letter posted in the Internet.

Rivera said the old building, which was serving as classrooms, library and guidance office, was severely destroyed, prompting members of the school community to condemn it.

"Now, we do not have any space to transfer the facilities. With the very meager income of the school, we cannot help but solicit financial assistance from our *kababayans* who are getting their education in this school," she said.

When this correspondent visited the school after Typhoon "Milenyo" last year, the students were still using the damaged and roofless building to continue with their studies. But the succeeding typhoons rendered it completely useless.

To alleviate the plight of the survivors, Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez distributed farm tools and equipment, seeds for cash crops, high breed corn and *palay*, swine and other livestock under the "Agri-Rehabilitation Program for Bondoc Peninsula" of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Suarez said the Bondoc Peninsula lost at least 17 percent of the coconut trees and those that have survived would not bear fruits for the next two years.

"The people need alternative livelihood which is now being offered by planting high value crops. This is an opportunity for the farmers who have long been dependent on coconut to explore alternative livelihood," Suarez said during the distribution ceremony in Unisan last week.

Mulanay Vice Mayor Andy Baronia said the distribution of high value vegetables seeds and modern farm equipment partly fulfilled the needs of the survivors. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

DA seeks $100,000 agri assistance for Bicol

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has sought $100,000 emergency assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations for Bicol's agriculture sector, said a statement from the DA regional office in Pili, Camarines Sur.

Emily Bordado, chief of the communications section here, said Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap was working out the details with the FAO on the requested allotment for farm inputs which will benefit the typhoon-ravaged region.

The FAO emergency assistance will be allotted for vegetable seeds, fertilizers, farming tools, chickens and fingerling.

She added that another FAO program was being drawn up with the DA for areas hit by typhoons in other regions.

Late last year, the DA here reported that 101,308 farming families lost their livelihood to two successive typhoons, "Reming" and "Seniang," that ravaged Bicol a week apart from each other.

The DA estimated the damages in livestock and fisheries at P137 million and P138 million, respectively, with all other crop losses recorded at hundreds of millions of pesos, except for corn production.

Affecting 23,085 families dependent on rice production, the estimated losses in rice production reached P154 million, equivalent to 70,208 metric tons of rice crop destroyed.

The DA has initially provided emergency assistance, which included P90,000 worth of vegetables totaling eight tons, to farm families, Bordado said.

They have also provided 500 bags of rice to help augment rice inventories in Camarines Sur and Albay, she added.

"The employees from the main office in Quezon City and from other regional offices have also forgone the traditional Christmas parties and instead pooled their donations of cash and kind for the typhoon victims," Bordado said as she cited local initiatives to assist the Bicol farmers.

Free lunch checks absenteeism of Negros Oriental pupils

By Romy Amarado
Inquirer Visayas

DUMAGUETE CITY—GOVERNMENT and school officials in Negros Oriental have found a way to check absenteeism and cutting of classes among elementary pupils in public schools, especially in the mountains—a free lunch.

Schools division superintendent Aleli Abne said attendance improved remarkably in public schools in the third district and several pilot areas in the first and second districts, where the "free noon meal program" was implemented beginning in October last year.

"Absenteeism and cutting of classes of our pupils have practically gone, after the program was put in place," Abne said.

She said the feeding program had also enhanced the learning capacity of the pupils, who were now in school and eating nutritious foods, but this could be validated during the examination to be given in March, she added.

A brainchild of Rep. Herminio Teves, the program was implemented in 202 public elementary schools in his district with 62,117 pupils and several schools in the two other districts.

Before, many pupils whose houses are quite far from school tended to skip the afternoon classes or would slip away when hungry, Abne said.

Under the program, the pupils are served rice, vegetables, *dilis* (anchovies) and other food with high nutrient contents.

Teves' chief of staff, Rolly Bongoyan said the program cost P164,610 a day. The funding, he said, was taken from the lawmaker's Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) and his personal money.

Bongoyan said the program might be stopped as funding was only up to March. The Senate disapproved a Teves-proposed budget for a nationwide feeding program despite its passage in the House of Representatives.

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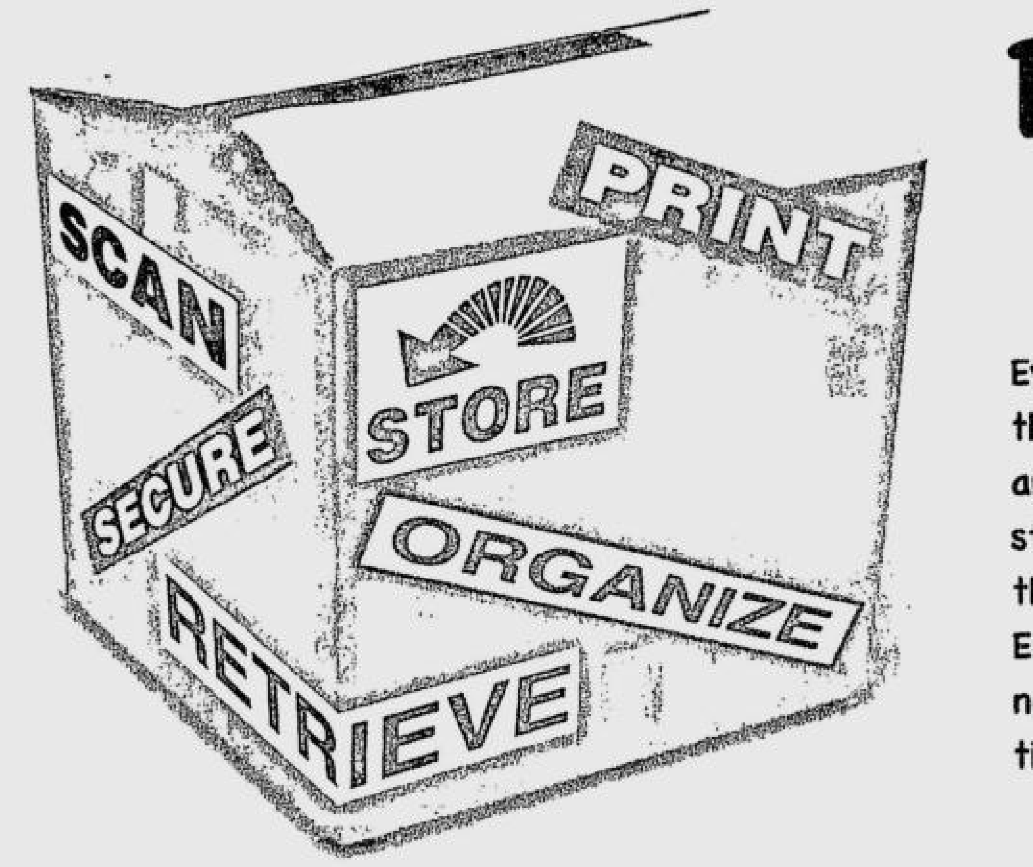

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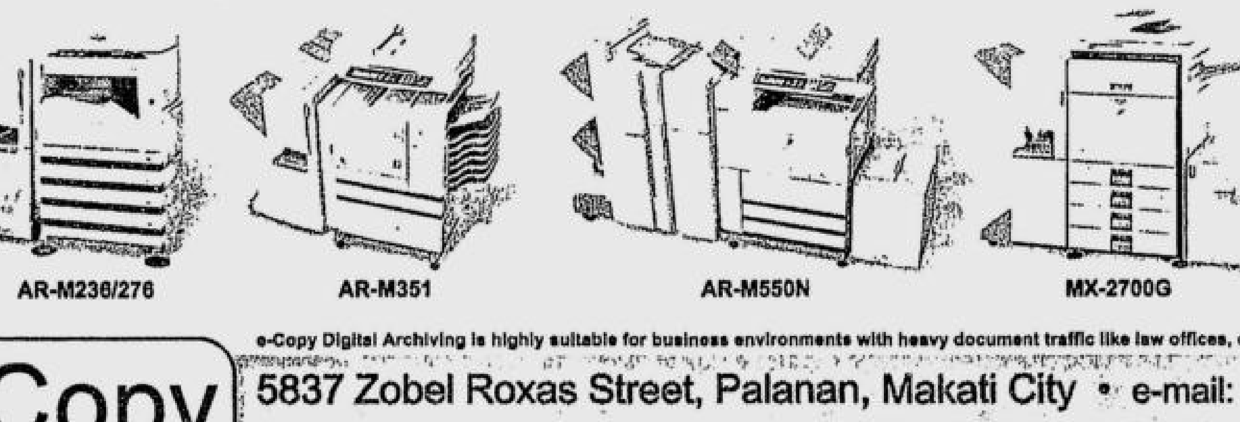

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Top NDF leaders elude gov't troops, Army commander says

TANDAG, SURIGAO DEL SUR—RANKING leaders of the communist-led National Democratic Front (NDF), including a senior who carries a P2-million bounty for his capture, have eluded government troops during a raid on their hideout in Barangay Santa Juana in Tagbina town here, the Army said.

Col. Jose Vizcarra, head of the Army's 401st Infantry Brigade said on Friday that the top NDF leaders had just left their camp, when soldiers of the 36th Infantry Battalion under Lt. Col. Joel Madarang, arrived.

Vizcarra said that among those who escaped were Prudencio Calubid, one of the alleged organizers of the New People's Army (NPA) in Samar, who has a P2-million reward for his capture.

The other NDF leaders were Leo Velasco, Francisco Fernandez and Elizabeth Principe.

"The top leaders have been in Tagbina and Lingig towns in Surigao del Sur, and Bunawan, Rosario and Trento towns in Agusan del Sur since last month. They were waiting for the arrival of their peers, who will attend a plenum in February in this province," Vizcarra said.

He said the military remained optimistic that it would soon capture Calubid and his group. "They are comparatively slow in their movements," he said.

He described the group as comprising of rebels in their 60s.

Earlier, the military said it had cordoned the area where Jorge Madlos, NDF spokesperson for Mindanao, was hiding. But Madlos has remained scot-free.

Vizcarra said the military had deployed about 800 soldiers in and around Tagbina about three weeks ago as efforts to capture the rebels were intensified.

Despite the failure to capture them, the military operations had yielded positive results, like the fall of another rebel camp on Friday.

Vizcarra said an irate NPA member was working with the military against his former-comrades.

The same member led soldiers to a camp in Tagbina, which hosted the "largest rebel bomb-making" facility discovered on Wednesday, he said.

Vizcarra said the rebel, who acted as caretaker of the facility, became angry when his comrades shot at his house a few days ago.

The incident narrowly missed his family, and this has made the caretaker think twice, he said.

The facility, hidden in a cave in Sitio Greenfields in Barangay Santa Juana, fell into military hands following a clash with NPA rebels.

Maj. Samuel Sagun, spokesperson of the Army's 401st Infantry Brigade, said soldiers recovered 42 containers of Super dynamites, detonating cords, several antitank and Claymore base plates, M-16 rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and an advanced ammunition reloader.

"The bomb materials were more than enough to produce 250 powerful landmines," he said. *Bert Pacate and Franklin Caliguid, Inquirer Mindanao*

ABS HERBS INT'L. appoints GETZ BROS. AS THE NEW DISTRIBUTOR

ABS Herbs Int'l., the manufacturer of ABS Bitter Herbs Capsule, ABS Herbal Tea, Charagen Ampalaya Tea, Kolestrim coconut fiber capsule, and Grace Virgin Coconut Oil, appoints Getz Bros. Philippines, Inc. to be its exclusive distributor in the Philippines. Getz Bros. Philippines, Inc. boast of a strong and experienced sales force, a wide logistics network all across the archipelago, with more than 90 years of distribution experience. This new partnership will ensure the presence of ABS Herbs products in all supermarkets, drugstores, and groceries nationwide. Signing the contract were (from left to right) MRS. GRACE GALINDEZ-GUPANA - Vice President of ABS Herbs, MR. PAUL GUPANA - President of ABS Herbs, MR. JAMES SIMKINS - Director of Corporate Development in South East Asia for Getz Bros., MR. ED MAURICIO - Vice President for Sales and Marketing for Getz Bros. For retail outlets who wish to order please call 631-1511 to 16 or visit www.abs-herbs.com.ph for more information about ABS Herbs.

DINAGYANG ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS
High school students present a showcase of different stories of Panay Island during the Dinagyang Festival in Iloilo City.

Dolphin dies in Albay

LEGAZPI CITY—A STRANDED Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*) found in a village on the island-municipality of Rapu-Rapu, Albay died on Tuesday night, the Philippine Coast Guard said on Friday.

The people "tried to tow the dolphin deeper into the sea but it came back," said Romeo Trias, chief master-at-arms of the Coast Guard.

Trias told the villagers not to eat the creature and transport it to this city as soon as possible.

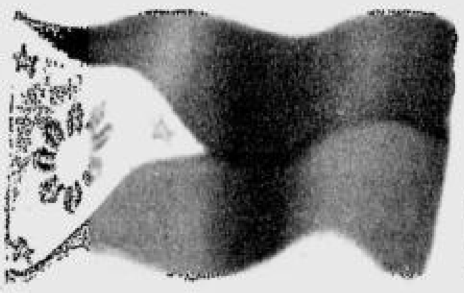
Jo Roco, public information officer of the Bicol Scuba Divers Foundation Inc., said the dolphin could not have been feeling well. It died past 6 a.m. even before it could be moved here the next day.

The male animal was 2.5 meters long and weighed 20 kilos, said Ruby Mendones, science research specialist of the Coastal and Marine Management Division of the Protected Areas, Wildlife and Coastal Zone Management Service. Based on the measurements, she said, it could be a juvenile.

"The body was robust and covered with white scars, had lesions and on the head, it was black in color but pale underside," Mendones said.

Roco said rescuers should have consulted authorities first before doing anything to the creature. "They should have done first aid and they should have not removed the dolphin from the water," he said.

"If removed from the water, the dolphin should have been blanketed with a wet cloth and placed on a stretcher," he said. *Joanna Los Baños, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



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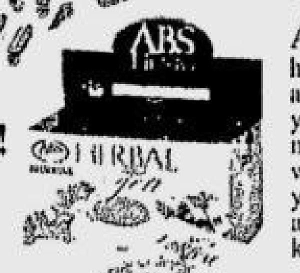

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The recent visit of the Korean Food and Drugs Administration (KFDA) team in coordination with the Philippine Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) Administration to several chosen food manufacturers in the country. concluded to export quality products to South Korea. ABS Gen Herbs Int'l.. the pioneer and herbal market leader was hand picked by KFDA and was highly recommended by individual Korean export traders and is now qualified. Mr. Sung Kee Lim, Director - Food Safety Management Team - (KFDA) commended "I was relieved of my physical anxieties when I used ABS HERBS products during my stay in the Philippines. I will recommend its importation to prominent Korean Importers for my country. I also appreciate ABS Herbs employees as hardworking."

Canadian Acupuncturist & Health Researcher, Dr. Ray Vincent said, "I was amazed of the effect of XanthoneMax Mangosteen Capsules on my body. ABS Herbal products are really effective for my immune system. We really need these natural products to combat environmental radical pollution, as well as stress." Also Leonida Apostol said, "I consulted a Doctor because of stomach pain. I was diagnosed to have a cyst inside my stomach and have to undergo operation. Because of financial problem, I did not went to an operation and instead, I used ABS Bitter Herbs capsule regularly. Now, I do not feel any pain in my stomach and my cyst disappeared."

An Abstract on the Comparative Study on the effectiveness of Active Bitter Supplement Herbs / ABS Bitter Herbs and Simvastatin in Dyslipidemia by Dr. Exelsior Valdez, MD, MPH, FPCS: A prospective randomized study was done comparing the herbal food supplement (ABS Herbs) and Statin in a group of 300 patients who had blood cholesterol 240mg dl or more. aged 30 to 65 years old. 150 patients were randomized to be given a herbal medicine (ABS Herbs) with a drop out rate of 19.33%. Likewise. another one hundred fifty patients were given Statin (Simvastatin) with a drop out rate of 22%. Patients were followed-up for a period of 12 weeks and cholesterol monitoring done every 4 weeks. After 12 weeks. both showed a significant decrease of blood cholesterol. The decline in ABS Herbs was 43.90% and 51.09% in Simvastatin with no statistical difference between the two (p-value is .060). It was concluded that Active Bitter Supplement Herbs is safe and effective in lowering blood cholesterol. There were no serious side effects on both products. Three patients who received ABS had transient constipation but relieved after two weeks of therapy. Five patients who took Simvastatin complained of flatulence but were tolerable and mild. No drug withdrawal due to side effects. "Also, before, I was suffering from severe pains on my knees. I tried ABS Herbal products regularly and I was relieved of all pains. My children and my wife who were not fond of eating vegetables used ABS Herbal products as substitutes for vegetables. Now, they are all in good health and my wife's body figure has improved."

ABS HERBS recently appoints GETZ BROS. Phils., Inc. to be its exclusive distributor in the Philippines. This new partnership ensures the availability of ABS Herbs Products in all drugstores, supermarkets, & groceries nationwide.

Anti-Red groups being turned into co-ops

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—VILLAGE-based anticommunist groups organized by the military in Central Luzon last year have begun taking another role as economic cooperatives.

The new direction of the controversial Barangay Defense System (BDS), formed among civilians during the stint of retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, showed as three ventures in two Nueva Ecija towns declared by the Army as "liberated" from the control of the New People's Army.

Two groups in Barangays Bagong Barrio and Yuson in Guimba town are into fertilizer lending and hand tractor rental, through the help of the provincial government, said Lt. Col. Gregory Cayetano, chief of the Army's 71st Infantry Battalion.

Another group in Barangay Parista in Lupao town last week started a feasibility study on charcoal making and mushroom growing.

Cayetano said 118 BDS units had been set up in Guimba, Cuyapo and Lupao, all on the northwestern part of Nueva Ecija.

Maj. Gen. Juanito Gomez, who succeeded Palparan in the 7th Infantry Division, said at least 4,711 BDS groups had been organized in Central Luzon.

The BDS, whose members are unarmed but authorized to set up checkpoints and conduct inspections, helps the military block the return of rebels in the communities.

Practically the eyes and ears of the military in the village, each BDS has 20 to 100 members, recruited during or after intelligence and combat operations by Army units and civic missions by government agencies since May 2006 when Palparan heightened the antiinsurgency campaign in Central Luzon.

Gomez said the military would give the BDS training on defense and information collection, and help them put up livelihood programs.

He said BDS supervision would eventually be turned over to the Philippine National Police.

Cayetano said the livelihood development support as aid in fighting poverty was mandated by President Macapagal-Arroyo's Executive Order 21 or the National Internal Security Plan for "insurgency-cleared areas."

Only six BDS groups have so far prepared livelihood plans while awaiting funds from government and private partners.

Those in Barangay Parista on Tuesday went to see how charcoal blocks were made by the Kabulinawan Tree Planters Association in Barangay Puncan in Carranglan town and mushroom culture in Barangay Sto. Rosario in Sto. Domingo town.

The military has tapped the Nueva Ecija Small and Medium Enterprise Development Council and the Nueva Ecija Chamber of Commerce to provide funds, and the Department of Trade and Industry, DENR and Department of Agriculture to give technical assistance.

BDS president Roberto Gaid said his village had stopped being a hotbed of insurgency since 2005.

The yearly commemoration of the "Lupao massacre" in Parista and nearby Namulandayan has stopped since 2005, he said. At least 17 people were killed in the Feb. 10, 1987, attack by soldiers who came to avenge the death of their officer.

Benjamin Andaya, Namulandayan barangay chair, said the villagers wanted to "just leave the past behind and start anew." Livelihood, he added, is now their "main concern."

Iloilo int'l airport to open in April

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE ILOILO INTERnational airport will be open to commercial flights in April and is expected to boost the tourism industry and economy in Western Visayas.

The P8.759-billion project is 97-percent complete and the first commercial flight will land there on April 18, according to Sen. Franklin Drilon, who inspected the site with Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza on Friday.

"This will spur the economic growth of Iloilo and Western Visayas," Drilon said. He said the airport will serve as a "new gateway for the Visayas."

The number of Iloilo-Manila and Manila-Iloilo passengers is expected to reach more than 800,000 by 2010, according to a forecast of the Department of Transportation and Communication.

The current airport in Mandurriao District here is the fourth busiest in the country in terms of number of passengers, next to the Ninoy Aquino, Mactan-Cebu and Davao international airports.

Construction of the Iloilo international airport started in 2004 and will be completed on March 18. The airport is being built on a 188-hectare area straddling Sta. Barbara and Cabatuan towns, 24 kilometers west of here.

It is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, including a modern three-story terminal with a floor area of about 12,000 square meters, control towers, a cargo terminal, and landing and navigation systems. It can accommodate six aircraft parking simultaneously.

Funding came from a P5.259-billion loan from the Special Yen Loan Package of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and a Philippine government counterpart fund of P928 million.

The Taisei-Shimizu Joint Venture will turn over the airport to the DOTC on March 17.

With the opening of the airport, the 54-ha site of the current airport would be converted into a commercial and light industry complex, Drilon said. The Department of Finance has placed the area's market value at P1 billion.

The P5.751-billion international airport in Silay City in Negros Occidental will be open in July next year.

The government has allotted P179 million for the improvement and expansion of the Kalibo airport in Aklan, the gateway to the world-famous resort island of Boracay. It will be completed in April 2008.

Visitors to central Philippines reached 4.23 million in 2005, or 28 percent of the country's total regional travelers.

MANDURRIAO
DELGADO

SECURITY AT THE FESTIVAL ARNOLD ALMACEN INQUIRER VISAYAS
A member of a bomb disposal unit secures the area around the Freedom Grandstand before the start of the Kasadyaan competition of the Dinagyang festival.

Execs say actor brought Muslim tourists to Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—THE CITY TOURism office has credited actor Robin Padilla, an Islamic convert, for drawing at least 30,000 tourists to the summer capital last week for a three-day prayer summit called the "Grand Johor" convention.

The event has drawn the country's Islamic scholars and students, many of whom arrived here in batches, said Benedicto Alhambra, city tourism officer.

Padilla is among the event's major guests and has been active in the highly exclusive program, he said.

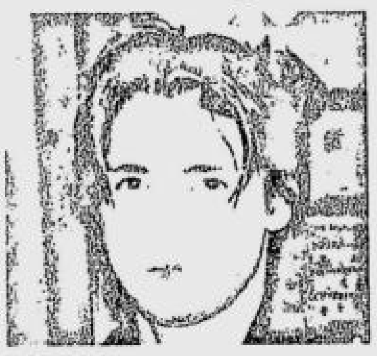
Alhambra said the event was the first major Muslim assembly to be hosted by Baguio, and local officials coordinated with organizers to address the requirements of the participants without offending anyone.

The city was concerned about a sustained supply of food prepared according to Islamic custom, and sanitation, he said.

The local government has relinquished control over public toilets and shower rooms to a private firm.

This is a test, Alhambra said, to determine how prepared Baguio tourism officials are in handling tourists with specialized religious needs.

Although Baguio has always been a tourist destination, the event is hardly typical of the city's average visitor.



PADILLA

Organizers have declined media coverage. While a few guests have booked hotel rooms, many have requested to camp out at Burnham Park.

City officials have discouraged some families from digging up their own latrines at Burnham and have instead offered to facilitate the rental of portable toilets for their use, Alhambra said.

Acting Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. was advised on Thursday about complaints that the event has disrupted park activities, so tourism officials had to fend off comments attacking the guests.

Bedejim Abdullah, a local Islamic scholar, said the event was one of many Muslim-oriented projects for Baguio. A Mindanao bazaar, he said, has been included in this year's activities to celebrate Panagbenga or the Baguio Flower Festival. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

ROUNDUP

Civic group to plant 11,000 tree saplings

ABOUT 3,000 members of the civic group Kiwanis Philippine Luzon District is set to plant 11,040 tree saplings along major highways until September in support of the Green Philippine Highway (GPH) project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Anthony Macaraig, district governor, said the members would plant 6-8 feet high tree saplings. Each of the 120 clubs that make up district will plant 92 tree saplings in celebration of the 92nd founding anniversary of Kiwanis International held on Jan. 21. Macaraig said the first batch of 92 trees, mostly narra and mahogany, had been planted at Barangay Pinugay in Antipolo City. ***Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon***

Albay bags Bicol student press awards

POLANGUI, Albay—The devastation wrought by Typhoon "Reming" on schools in Legazpi City and the province did not weaken the resolve of campus journalists who bagged the overall championships in the recent 26th Regional Secondary Schools Press Conference held here on Jan. 24-26. The Albay division bagged the overall championship for the Filipino category while Legazpi was adjudged overall winner for the English category, said Norma Samantela, Education regional supervisor for campus journalism. Samantela said 1,068 campus journalists from 13 divisions all over Bicol took part in the annual competition, which had seven categories. ***Bobby Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon***

3 dead in Quezon diarrhea outbreak

LUCENA CITY—At least three persons died and more than 20 others were hospitalized in an outbreak of diarrhea in San Narciso, Quezon, last week. Allen Grinnel, a member of the staff of Rep. Danilo Suarez, said all the victims came from Sitio Madangcay in Barangay Binay. "Our main focus now is to control the spread of the disease," she said in a phone interview and added that the other victims were still confined at the municipal hospital. Suarez said village officials informed the staff of the outbreak during a medical mission in San Narciso on Thursday. Water tests revealed that the source of drinking water had been contaminated by animal wastes, Grinnel added. ***Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon***

3 slain in drinking spree

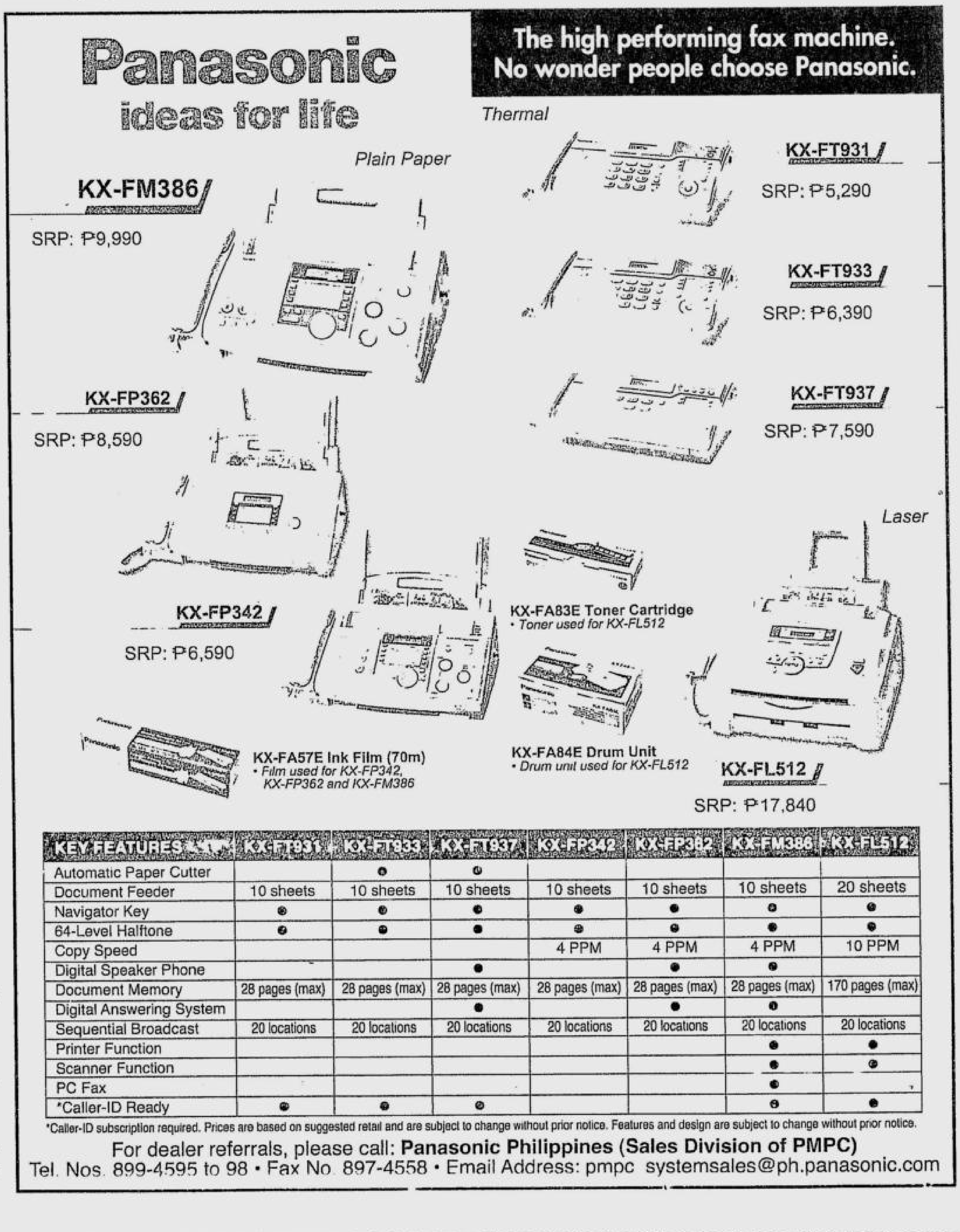
SANTO DOMINGO, Ilocos Sur—Three persons were killed when a group of men shot five men having a drinking session in Barangay Callautit here on Friday night. Police said Felix Valencia, 22, and Delfin Robiniol, 38, were with three others drinking in front of a rice mill at about 7:30 p.m. when they were attacked. Valencia, his brother Remegio, 13, who was standing near the group, and Robiniol died in the attack. ***Leoncio Balbin Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon***

Nursing student found dead in Laguna

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—The suspect in the killing of a 32-year-old nursing student found dead near a pigpen at the back of their house in San Pablo City on Jan. 22 has been arrested. San Pablo police chief Supt. Remilo Bamba said the body of Merlita de la Paz, a nursing student at STI San Pablo City and single parent, was found by her sister near their pigpen, a few meters from their house in Sitio 9, Barangay San Gabriel. The victim's neighbor, Benson Mendoza, 24, has been held for the killing. Bamba said the victim might have been sexually abused before she was killed. He said Mendoza's brother told police that his brother said that when the police invited the suspect for questioning, he immediately owned up to the killing. Bamba said a murder case would be filed against the suspect. ***Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon***

7 Cagayan towns watched as hot spots

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Police have identified at least seven towns in the province for possible inclusion in the list of hot spots in May's elections. Officials said they were monitoring Buguey, Gattaran, Iguig, Santa Ana, Enrile, Allacapan and Lasam towns because of incidents of election-related violence and sightings of communist rebels. They also urged candidates to avoid paying "permit to campaign fees" to New People's Army rebels. The appeal came after police recently arrested a man who was carrying a gift package containing a letter demanding P500 from a local politician. ***Estanislao Caldez, Inquirer Northern Luzon***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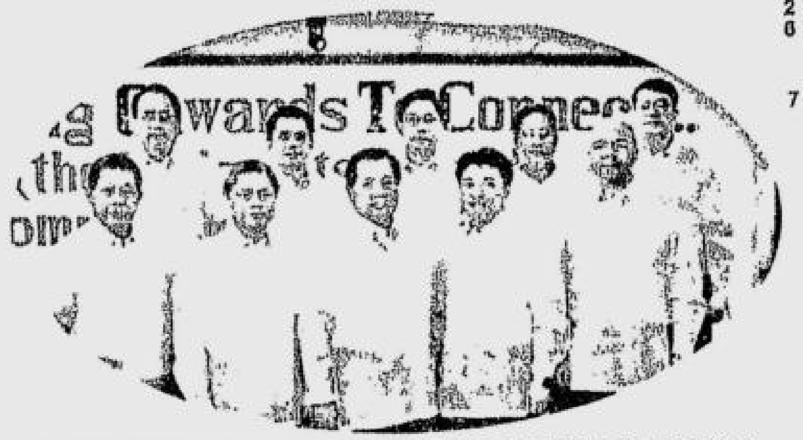
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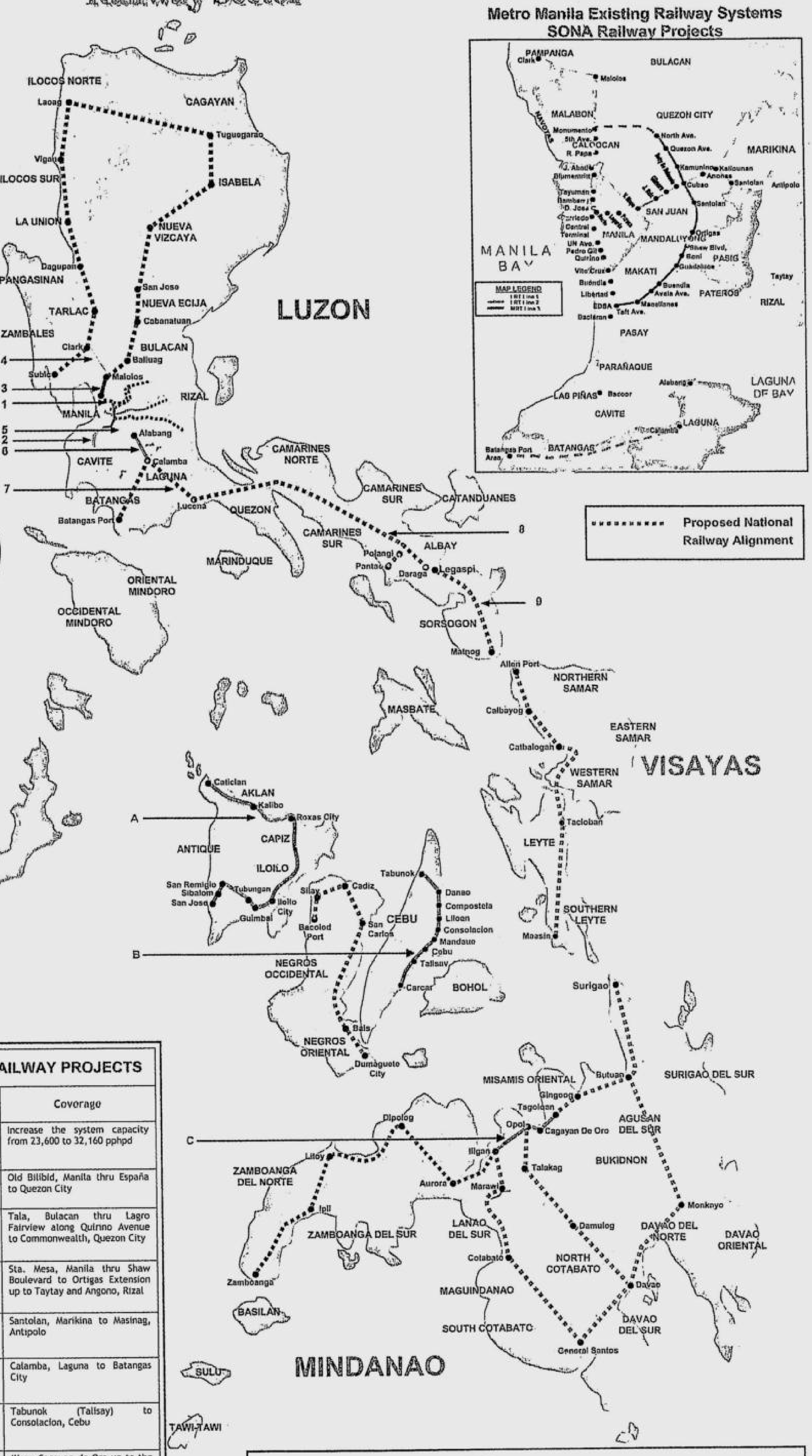
L-R Second Row: Dir. Ronilo Hermes A. Bacolod (MRT3), VP for Finance Demetrio V. Batu (NorthRail), Deputy Administrator Cesar B. Chavez (LRTA), Asst. Gen. Mngr. for Finance Rafael F. Mosura Jr. (PNR), Asst. Gen. Mngr. For Operations Edgardo R. Remonte (PNR)

Not in Picture: Pres. Jose L. Cortes (NorthRail)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SONA RAILWAY PROJECTS	
PROJECT NAME	Completion Date
▪▪▪▪▪▪ 1. LRT - MRT Loop Monumento North Avenue	April 2010
▬▬ 2. LRT Line 1 South Extension (Baclaran - Bacoor, Cavite)	2011
▬▬ 3. Northrail Phase 1 Section 1 Caloocan - Malolos, Bulacan	October 2009
---- 4. Northrail Phase 1 Section 2 Malolos, Bulacan - Clark, Pampanga	April 2011
-- 5. Northrail - Southrail Linkage Phase 1 Caloocan - Alabang	December 2008
▬▬ 6. Northrail - Southrail Linkage Phase 2 Alabang - Calamba	January 2010
▪▪▪▪▪ 7. Southrail Phase 1 Section 1 Calamba - Lucena	2010
▪▪▪▪▪ 8. Southrail Phase 1 Section 2 Lucena - Legaspi	2011
▪▪▪▪▪ 9. Southrail Phase 2 Comun, Daraga, Albay - Magtnog, Sorsogon	2012

PROPOSED RAILWAY PROJECTS	
PROJECT NAME	Coverage
MRT 3 Capacity Expansion	Increase the system capacity from 23,600 to 32,160 pphpd
MRT 4	Old Bilibid, Manila thru España to Quezon City
MRT 7	Tala, Bulacan thru Lagro Fairview along Quirino Avenue to Commonwealth, Quezon City
MRT8	Sta. Mesa, Manila thru Shaw Boulevard to Ortigas Extension up to Taytay and Angono, Rizal
LRT2 MASINAG EXTENSION	Santolan, Marikina to Masinag, Antipolo
CALAMBA-BATANGAS LINE	Calamba, Laguna to Batangas City
CEBU LRT*	Tabunok (Talisay) to Consolacion, Cebu
MINDANAO RAILWAY*	Iligan-Cagayan de Oro up to the municipalities of Tagoloan and Villanueva. This will serve the Laguindingan International Airport and the Mindanao Container Terminal
PANAY RAILWAY	Roxas City in the North to Iloilo City in the South

* The Cebu and Mindanao Railway Project Offices were created by Executive Order No. 536 dated 25 May 2006.

BENEFITS OF A RAILWAY SYSTEM

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- Accelerates the industrialization of the countryside
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- Decongests the metropolis
- Depollutes the metropolitan areas
- Decentralizes development to the rural areas
- Reduces national dependence on oil imports
- Reduces the importation of vehicles
- Reduces the cost of road maintenance
- Promotes inter-regional trade and commerce
- Provides cheaper, faster, safer, more convenient and more reliable transportation of people, goods and services
- Generates job opportunities

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE PROPOSED NATIONAL RAILWAY ACT (NRA)

- Establishment of a National Railway System
- Creation of a National Railway Authority
- Creation of a Railway Regulatory Board
- Creation of a Railway Trust Fund
- Establishment of National Railway Academy
- Exemption of Railway System from payment of Real property tax
- Promotion of Public-Private partnership in the development, implementation and operation of a Railway System
- Promotion of the participation of the Local Government Units in the development, implementation and operations of Railway System
- Delineation and preservation of the railway right-of-way
- Track gauge and fare standardization

Light Rail Transit Authority

METROSTAR EXPRESS

Philippine National Railways

Greetings to the DOTC on its 108th Founding Anniversary from DMI Consultants and the Minsupala Research and Development Center

5,000 Filipino maids march in Hong Kong

From page A1

Enraged by tales of terminated contracts, the steep cost of training and tests required by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, and alleged extortion in Manila's airport, the domestic workers demanded the immediate scrapping of the new POEA guidelines.

A petition to junk the new scheme was submitted to two labor officials from the Philippine consulate here, who refused to address the agitated crowd that booed at every mention of the consulate or the government.

"The additional P5,000 to P10,000 fee for the training and the certificate will even worsen the financial situation of OFWs and our families," some 135 groups who signed the petition said in their paper.

"We are already burdened by various government fees such as the high price of a passport, the authentication fee, and even the Overseas Employment Certificate. For the government, every document and every service that we require has a price tag," the groups said.

Filipinos comprise the biggest population of foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong, with over 120,000 working in local households.

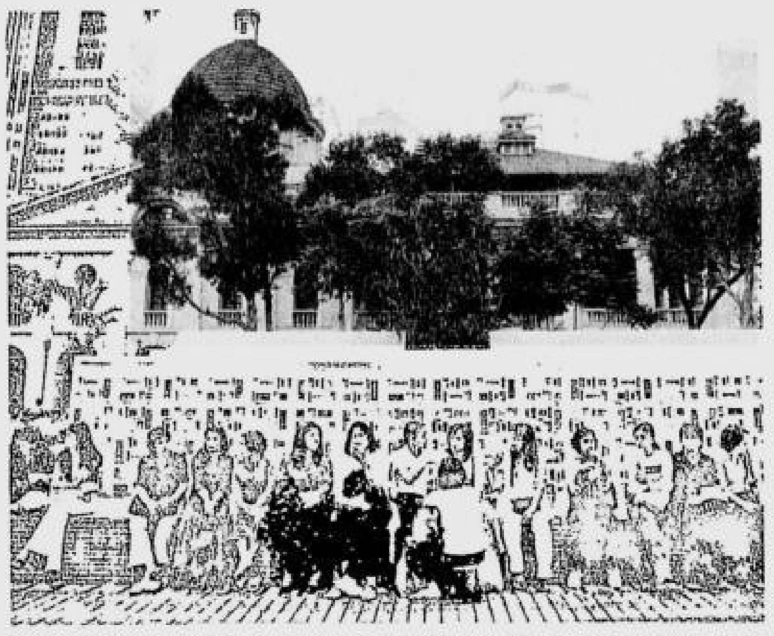
Hong Kong is one of the top three destinations of Filipino maids, according to the Philippine Overseas Labor Office.

United Filipinos in Hong Kong chair Dolores Balladares said the crowd turnout was the biggest since the protests over the wage cut in 2001, which saw a peak of 12,000 Filipino workers out on the streets.

'Money-making scheme'

"This was hastily called. We only announced this last week, but so many people came here because they are really angry about this new money-making scheme," Balladares said in Filipino.

"We expect more will come next week," she said. Next Sunday's protest will be led by church organizations in Hong Kong.



FILIPINO domestic helpers rest at the Statue Square near the Legco building in Hong Kong in this photo taken in 2004. INQUIRER PHOTO

Migrante secretary general Rowena de la Cruz said one member had reported the case of a Filipino domestic worker who had to pay P15,000 at the airport so she could get a certificate without undergoing the required training and the tests.

De la Cruz said the helper, a friend of one of its members in Hong Kong's Sha Tin district, was in the Philippines on an emergency exit because her father had died, but when she was about to fly back to Hong Kong, she was stopped at the airport.

Migrante, however, could not identify who exactly had asked for the P15,000 in exchange for the certificate. Tales of employers terminating contracts of vacationing Filipino workers who could not return on time were common in Hong Kong.

'Extortion'

"This is extortion. We do not want these training or tests. They are only a burden to us and our families," Balladares said.

The protesters' line snaked from Chater Road in Central to Harcourt Garden beside the United Center in Admiralty, which houses the Philippine consulate.

The march on Harcourt Garden caused traffic jams on major thoroughfares in Central, prompting police to block more groups from joining the crowd already gathered at the plaza.

"I'm just here to support," said Gloria Javier, who has been a domestic worker in Hong Kong for 15 years.

Javier, who does not belong to any militant organization and normally spends her day off in church, said she had heard of the new guidelines and had to drop plans of recommending her niece in the Philippines to an employer here whose need for a maid was urgent.

Gov't wants more

"*Hindi naman marami ang pera namin. Malaki na nga ang natutulong ng* remittances *tapos kukuhaan pa kami ulit, parang sobra na naman* (We're not earning a lot. Our remittances help the economy and yet, the government wants more. It's too much)," she said.

Unifil's Norman Carnay said the Hong Kong Police's community relations officer had told the group that it would issue an official warning to the organizers for going over the number of protesters approved by the police.

To acquire a permit to use the Harcourt Garden, organizers told police only around 1,500 people would come, but Carnay said police had estimated the crowd at 5,000 when Unifil stopped others from joining. The INQUIRER count placed the crowd at Harcourt Garden at 4,000 at its peak.

Those who were stopped by police on their way to Harcourt Garden conducted their own program at Chater Garden in Central.

Ice melt means global warming report all wet

From page A1

letter of protest over the omission.

Unpredictable

The melting ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica are a fairly recent development that has taken scientists by surprise. They don't know how to predict its effects in their computer models.

But many scientists fear it will mean the world's coastlines are swamped much earlier than most predict.

Others believe the ice melt is temporary and won't play such a dramatic role.

That debate may be the central one as top scientists and bureaucrats from around the world gather in Paris to finish the first of four major global warming reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The panel was created by the United Nations in 1988.

After four days of secret word-by-word editing, the final report will be issued on Feb. 2.

Rise in sea level

The early versions of the report predict that by 2100, the sea level will rise anywhere between 5 and 23 inches. That's far lower than the 20 to 55 inches forecast by 2100 in a study published in the peer-review journal Science this month. Other climate experts, including Nasa's James Hansen, predict sea level rise that can be measured by feet more than inches.

The report is also expected to include some kind of proviso that says things could be much worse if ice sheets continue to melt.

The prediction being considered this week by the IPCC is "obviously not the full story because ice sheet decay is something we cannot model right now, but we know it's happening," said Stefan Rahmstorf, a climate panel lead author from Germany who made the larger prediction of up to a 55-inch rise in the sea level.

"A document like that tends to underestimate the risk," Rahmstorf said.

"This will dominate their discussion because there's so much contentiousness about it," said Bob Corell, chair of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, a multinational research effort.

"If the IPCC comes out with significantly less than one meter (about 39 inches of sea level rise), there will be people in the science community saying we don't think that's a fair reflection of what we know," Corell added.

Large melt of ice

In the past, the climate change panel didn't figure there would be large ice melt in west Antarctica and Greenland this century and didn't factor it into the predictions. Those forecasts were based only on the sea level rise from melting glaciers (which are different from ice sheets) and the physical expansion of water as it warms.

But in 2002, Antarctica's 1,255-square-mile Larsen B ice shelf broke off and disappeared in just 35 days. And recent Nasa data show that Greenland is losing 53 cubic miles of ice each year—twice the rate it was losing in 1996.

Even so, there are questions about how permanent the melting in Greenland and especially Antarctica are, said panel lead author Kevin Trenberth, chief of climate analysis at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Colorado.

While he said the melting ice sheets "raise a warning flag," Trenberth wondered if "some of this might just be temporary."

University of Alabama at Huntsville professor John Christy said Greenland didn't melt much within the past thousand years when it was warmer than now.

Consensus-building

Christy, a reviewer of the panel work, is a prominent so-called skeptic. He acknowledges that global warming is real and manmade, but he believes it is not as worrisome as advertised.

Those scientists who say the sea level will rise even more are battling a consensus-building structure that routinely issues scientifically cautious global warming reports, scientists say.

The IPCC reports have to be unanimous, approved by 154 governments—including the United States and oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia—and already published peer-reviewed research done before mid-2006.

Rahmstorf, a physics and oceanography professor at Potsdam University in Germany, says: "In a way, it is one of the strengths of the IPCC to be very conservative and cautious and not overstate any climate change risk." *AP*

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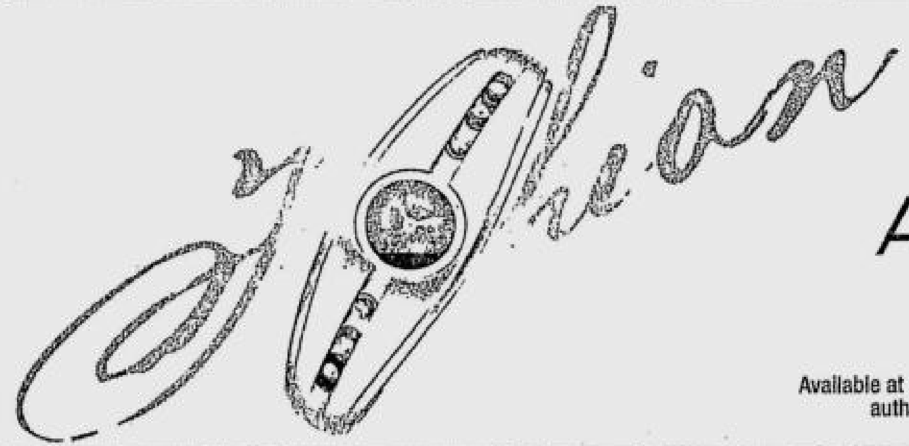

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SPORTS

Miñoza closes with 71; Goosen clinches it by 1

DOHA—FRANKIE MIÑOZA UNderscored his status as the Philippines' top golfer by closing with a 1-under-par 71 Sunday for a respectable even-par 288 finish in the $2.2 Commercialbank Qatar Masters won by Retief Goosen.

Miñoza, who started out with a 75 but rallied with a 69 and 73, finished in a five-way tie for 53rd in this second leg of the Asian Tour co-sanctioned with the European Tour at the Doha Golf Club.

Warming up for his return to the Philippine Open this week at Wack Wack, the Filipino star birdied the 10th hole and then eagled the par-4 12th for a 33 coming home. He hit the turn with a 38.

Juvic Pagunsan, who ruined a promising start of 70-71 with a 77 in the third round, tapered off with a 75 to finish with a 5-over 293. He landed in a three-way tie for 67th.

South Africa's Goosen finished birdie-eagle for a 69 and won by one stroke with a 273. Australian Nick O'Hern had a 70 for second at 274 with Ernie Els rallying to finish third at 275 after a 67. *Asian Tour News*

RED Bull's Rico Villanueva has control despite losing his balance in a low-post tussle with San Miguel Beer's Romel Adducul AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Beermen, TNT Pals win again

GAMES WEDNESDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs Talk 'N Text
7:20 p.m.—Red Bull vs San Miguel Beer

By Musong R. Castillo

A FAVOR RETURNED, AND then some.

San Miguel Beer rebounded from a lopsided loss by playing with destructive force, posting a highly-physical 109-82 win last night and a 2-1 lead over the Red Bull Barako in their Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup semifinal series before the year's biggest crowd of close to 18,000.

And while the Beermen needed to come out with a new game face, Talk 'N Text just brandished the same winning formula in hacking out a 109-100 decision of Barangay Ginebra for a similar 2-1 edge.

San Miguel Beer's swashbuckling win came just two nights after the Barako had dealt the Beermen their worst beating in the tournament, 102-84, also at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We got intimidated by their (Barako's) physical game (in Game 2)," said SMB coach Chot Reyes. "I told my players that they'd better be ready to dish it and take it. *Matira na lang ang matibay* (Let's see who's the tougher team)."

Prior to last night, the worst Red Bull loss was a 22-point defeat at the hands of Sta. Lucia close to two months ago.

Reyes expects the rest of the best-of-seven series to be more physical than last night's Game 3. "*Wala nang pa*-cute (No more playing it coy), that's the only way to play Red Bull."

Meanwhile, Talk 'N Text jumped out of the gates with all guns firing, zooming to a 63-49 lead at the break before keeping the Gin Kings at bay the rest of the way to secure their second straight win in the series.

"This is still far from over," TNT coach Derrick Pumaren said. "We can't put our guard down. We have to stay focused and do our job because Ginebra is a team capable of coming back."

Ren-Ren Ritualo scored 22 points in the first half built around a 4-of-5 clip from beyond three-point range. He finished with 29 points, his best performance in the series.

Mark Caguioa, who scored in the 30s in each of both teams' first four confrontations, was held to 26 last night after going scoreless in the fourth period. He still led the Kings, who also got 20 points and 19 rebounds from Rudy Hatfield and 17 markers and a career-high 18 assists from Jay-Jay Helterbrand.

The Red Bull-San Miguel Beer game was halted several times because of physical play and a couple of face-offs among key players. Danny Ildefonso was thrown out after going nose-to-nose with Enrico Villanueva with 8:44 left.

Olsen Racela was clipped hard in the nose by Junthy Valenzuela after making a triple with the Beermen way ahead.

From 59-all, San Miguel dropped a telling 14-2 bomb for its first double-digit lead, 73-61, with 1:21 left in the third.

Danny Seigle shot 23 of his team-high 27 in the first three periods to spearhead the San Miguel offense. Ildefonso finished with 16 points, from zilch in Game 2, before getting tossed out for a second technical foul.

Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao felt there was a breakdown in his team's game.

"We just got outrebounded in an overwhelming fashion," Guiao said. "There was nothing different about the technical aspect of the plan. We just sent them to the line too many times."

The Beermen, who plucked down 75 boards compared to Red Bull's 49, converted on 27-of-35 free throw attempts, an output which Guiao said was "equivalent to one quarter of production."

The scores:

First Game

SAN MIGUEL 109—Seigle 27, Ildefonso 16, Adducul 12, Hontiveros 12, Racela 11, Gonzales 10, Tenorio 8, Tugade 7, Wilson 3, Espinas 2, Calaguio 1, Pena 0.

RED BULL 82—Najorda 15, Villanueva 14, Bagulo 11, Pennisi 11, Valenzuela 9, Alvarez 8, Cruz 6, Sharma 5, Fonacier 3. Membrere 0, Bugia 0, Robinson 0.

Quarters: 24-19, 46-48, 77-64, 109-82

Second Game

TALK 'N TEXT 109—Ritualo 29, Cardona 18, Carey 15, Alapag 12, Washington 11, Taulava 11, Belano 5, De Ocampo 4, Fran 2, Noble 2.

BARANGAY GINEBRA 100—Caguioa 26, Hatfield 20, Helterbrand 17, Salvacion 16, Reavis 9, Mamaril 6, Abarrientos 4, Tubid 2, Macapagal 0, Seigle 0.

Quarters: 30-all, 63-49, 90-83, 109-100

Late Sports

More Sports stories on A29-A32

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Police to protect 'walking victims'

By Tarra Quismundo

THE MAKATI POLICE HAVE A new mission: Protect the city's call center workforce.

Realizing that call center employees who go home at unholy hours are virtually "walking victims," the Makati Police Station will soon deploy police assistance teams to call center offices in the city.

"Right now, there are no police officers in call centers. And their employees are like walking victims as soon as they leave their offices, so we have to protect them," said Supt. Gilbert Cruz, Makati police chief.

According to him, two policemen will be deployed to every call center or a building housing several call centers during their workers' dismissal time.

"It will not take too many police officers because call centers are clustered in buildings. What they will do is secure the employees on their way to the loading points for jeepneys and buses," Cruz explained.

"This time, the police will really be focused on the call center employees," he said.

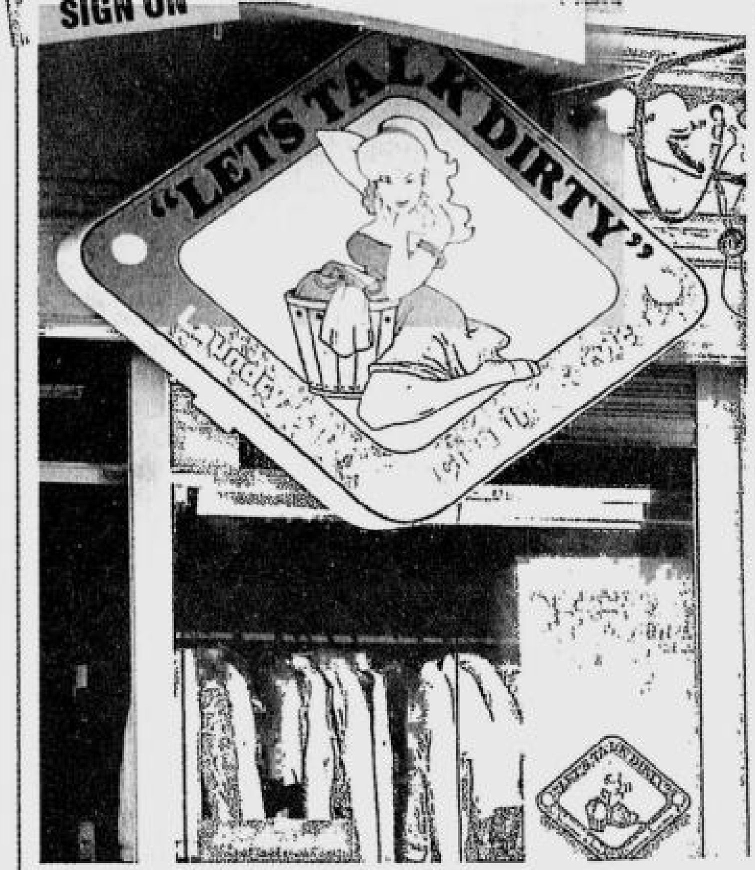
At present, only the security guards of buildings where the call centers are located provide protection to employees while police mobile patrols monitor the vicinity.

The more hands-on approach is aimed at averting crimes against call center employees, whom Cruz considers vulnerable because they work the graveyard shift.

"I've received reports that call center employees have fallen victim to snatching and robberies. We initiated this to curb crime incidence," he said.

As of 2005, there were 21 call centers in Makati City.

SIGN ON



IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK
The name of this establishment may seem suggestive but all the dirty talk that takes place in this laundromat on F. de la Rosa corner Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City revolves around soiled clothing customers bring in for washing. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

MMDA wants speedier response time to fires

By Tarra V. Quismundo

IN A BID TO IMPROVE AND SPEED up emergency response services, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) wants to revise existing procedure on how government and volunteer firefighters respond to fire incidents.

Mon Santiago, MMDA Metropolitan Road Rules Enforcement System director, yesterday said representatives of the agency would soon meet with officials of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), different volunteer fire organizations and community leaders in Metro Manila.

"We are revisiting protocol because we see that we should involve communities here. This is part of our program for joint emergency planning," Santiago said.

"Sometimes, problems ensue on the ground because the people do not understand what the firefighters are doing so we also have to inform them," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

The MMDA has observed that delays in responding to fire incidents often occur because of miscommunication between people in the affected community and responding firefighters, Santiago said.

"There tend to be irritants on the ground which cause ineffective response and misunderstandings and these may reach a point where these can cause delays. That's what we want to prevent," the MMDA official added.

Among the issues that will be discussed during the meeting are what can be done to inform the public about the SOP (standard operating procedure) firefighters follow in responding to a fire, in addition to coming up with a plan for evacuating affected families to clear the roads for responding fire trucks.

Clogged and narrow roads had several times been cited by firemen as among the reasons for their delayed response to fire incidents.

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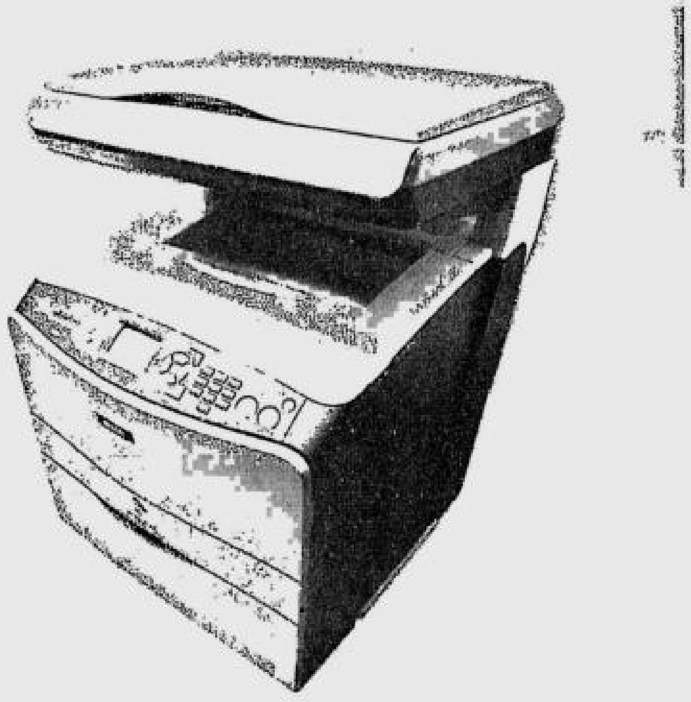

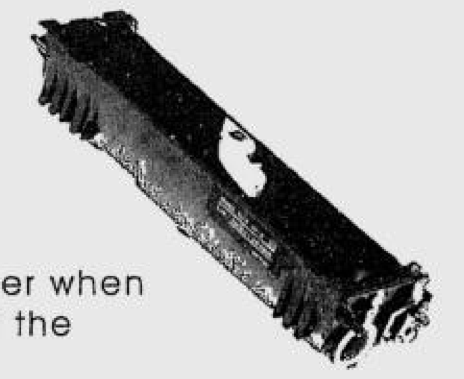

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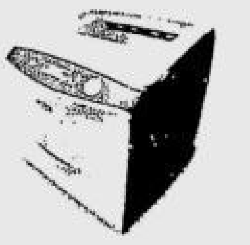

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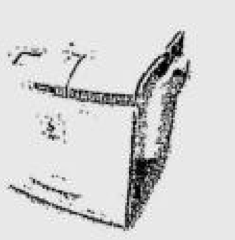

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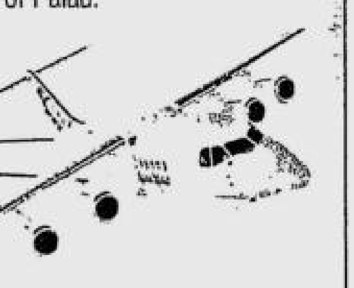

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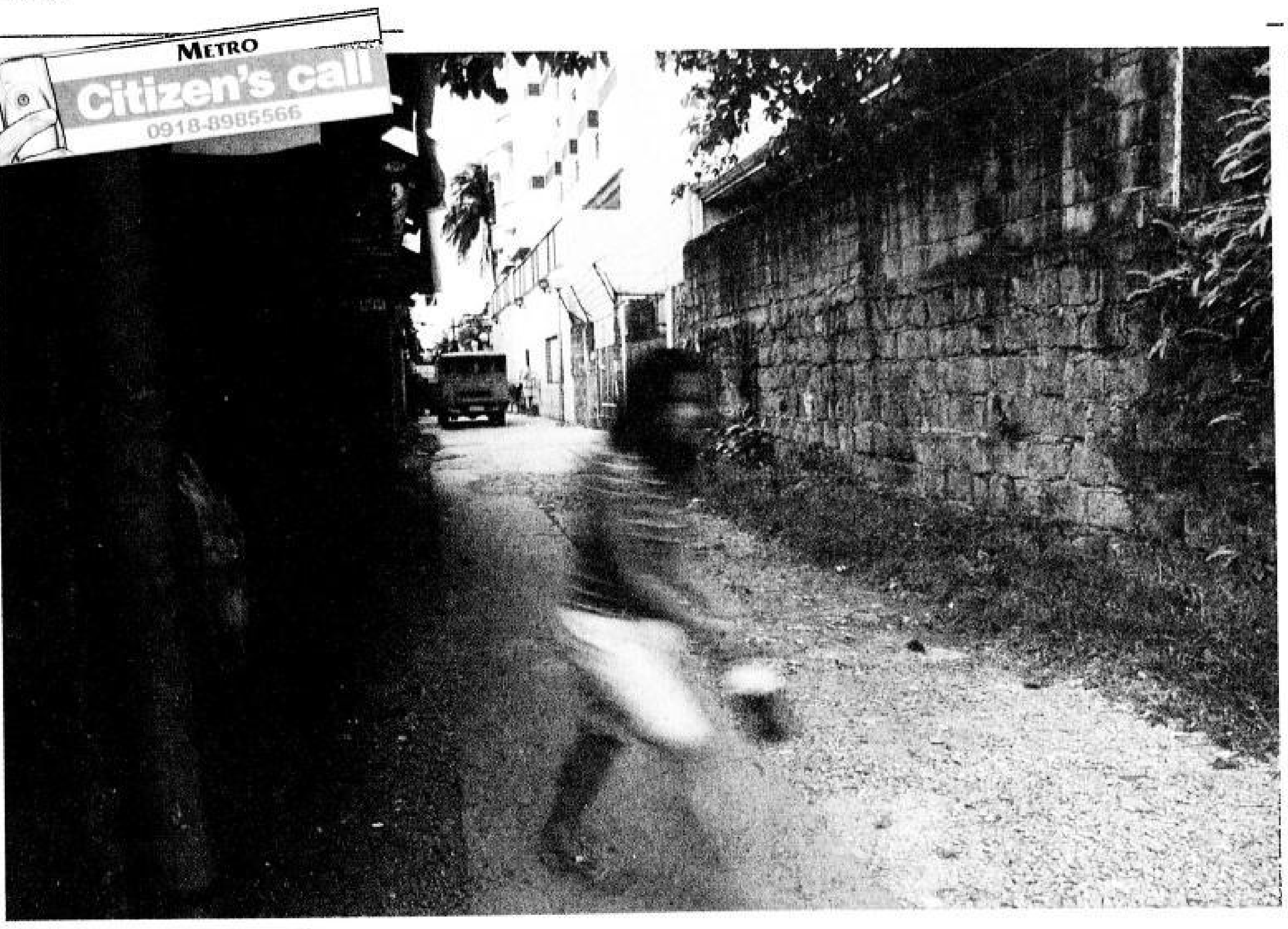


DARK AND DANGEROUS
Joel, 40, of Barangay Manresa, Quezon City texted this message: "I would like to report that incidents of snatching and other crimes have been reported to have happened in this dark alley from Matutum Street to Igdalig Street in Barangay Manresa. The alley is also a convenient toilet for many street bums who loiter in the area." JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

METRO
Citizen's call
0918-8985566

POLLUTION at Pinaglabanan Park in San Juan caused by government workers burning tires/electric wires to recover steel/copper which they sell.
—**WEBER, San Juan**

On Quirino Highway in Barangay Baesa, in front of Baesa Body Relax beside Queens Grille, a leaking water pipe is causing cars to slow down. Thank you and God bless.
—**TERESITA V. VILLARAMA, Quezon City**

Sa liit ng mga kalye dito sa Little Baguio ay kailangang one-way na lang para hindi masyadong matrapik (Because of the narrow streets here in Little Baguio, vehicular flow should only be one-way to reduce traffic).
—**ANGEL ABUNAN, San Juan**

METROBRIEFS

Extortion suspect arrested

A 42-YEAR-OLD MAN accused of extorting money from a barangay chair whom he had sued for graft was arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) during an entrapment in Cainta, Rizal. NBI director Nestor Mantaring identified the suspect as Salvador Francisco, a resident of of Gov. Pascual Felix Subdivision, Cainta, Rizal. He was arrested last Friday after receiving money from Gilberto Legaspi Igbiten, a barangay chair in Midland Homes, Cainta, whom he had charged at the Ombudsman last year with graft.
Tina G. Santos

Army coop to hold general assembly

THE PHILIPPINE Army Finance Center Producers Integrated Cooperative (PAFCPIC) will hold its annual general assembly and election on March 3, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Philippine Army Grandstand in Fort Bonifacio, Makati City. The group is marking its 26th year of meeting the needs of Filipino soldiers and their families with the theme, "PAFCPIC at 26: Ensuring Stronger Commitment to Service."

Witnessing history and making money, too

By Tarra V. Quismundo

HE STOOD BESIDE THE POLICE barricades as the city mayor fought an order for his suspension in October.

Three months later, he was just meters away when local policemen scuffled with burly American bodyguards for the custody of a US Marine convicted of rape.

Jun Pulancos, 33, has witnessed many significant events in the history of Makati City since 1994.

For 13 years, he has been a regular fixture at City Hall, where he "holds office," in a manner of speaking.

No, Pulancos is not a "government spy" tasked to keep track of the moves of opposition leader Mayor Jejomar Binay. Neither is he an agent on a mission to monitor the surroundings for suspicious persons or movements.

Pulancos, or Mang Jun as his friends call him, is a *taho* (soybean curd) vendor at the Makati City Hall—a place which he considers a good spot to do business, especially when there's trouble a-brewing.

"*Mas mabili pa kapag magulo kasi mas maraming tao* (Business is very brisk when there's trouble because there are more people)," said Mang Jun, a Bohol native who has held several odd jobs since moving to Metro Manila in 1991.

Selling *taho*, however, an affordable and popular all-day snack in the Philippines, has been his steady job for over a decade now.

His *taho* was a bestseller among supporters of Binay who stood vigil in front of City Hall for three days in October, when the mayor barricaded himself inside his office after Malacañang ordered his suspension on graft charges.

"That time, I felt sad too because I voted for him," said Mang Jun in Pilipino as he stood by the steps of City Hall, his shiny *taho* container already half empty because of brisk sales.

He fondly remembered the time when Binay treated all the senior citizens gathered at the City Hall quadrangle to a cup of *taho* each.

"He wanted to give all the seniors *taho* so he bought my entire stock," said Mang Jun, a resident of Barangay Kasilawan. He added that he earned P1,500 that day because of the mayor's generosity.

Mang Jun also recalled that he was just a few steps away last December when photographers and TV cameramen scrambled to take pictures of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, a US Marine convicted of raping a Filipino woman.

"I was behind the rolling cameras when they (reporters) were interviewing lawyers," he said proudly.

In the countless occasions on which Makati City made the headlines, Mang Jun was there as a witness, minding both his business and the city's. Indeed, he had the best seats in the house.

"I just stay in my spot and sell *taho*. I am already used to it. It's actually better for business," said Mang Jun, who at 18 worked as a dishwasher before a friend introduced him to the enterprise of selling *taho*.

Early each morning, he wakes up and purchases his supply for the day of cooked soybean curd. He prepares his sugar syrup (*arnibal*), and slow cooks a batch of sago (tapioca). By 7 a.m., he is already at City Hall, just in time for the stream of clients in the mood for a sweet light snack before stepping into City Hall, either to work or to transact business.

"Most of them (patrons) are lawyers, prosecutors and even judges. I have been here for so long that some of my steady clients have either retired or have already passed away," said Mang Jun.

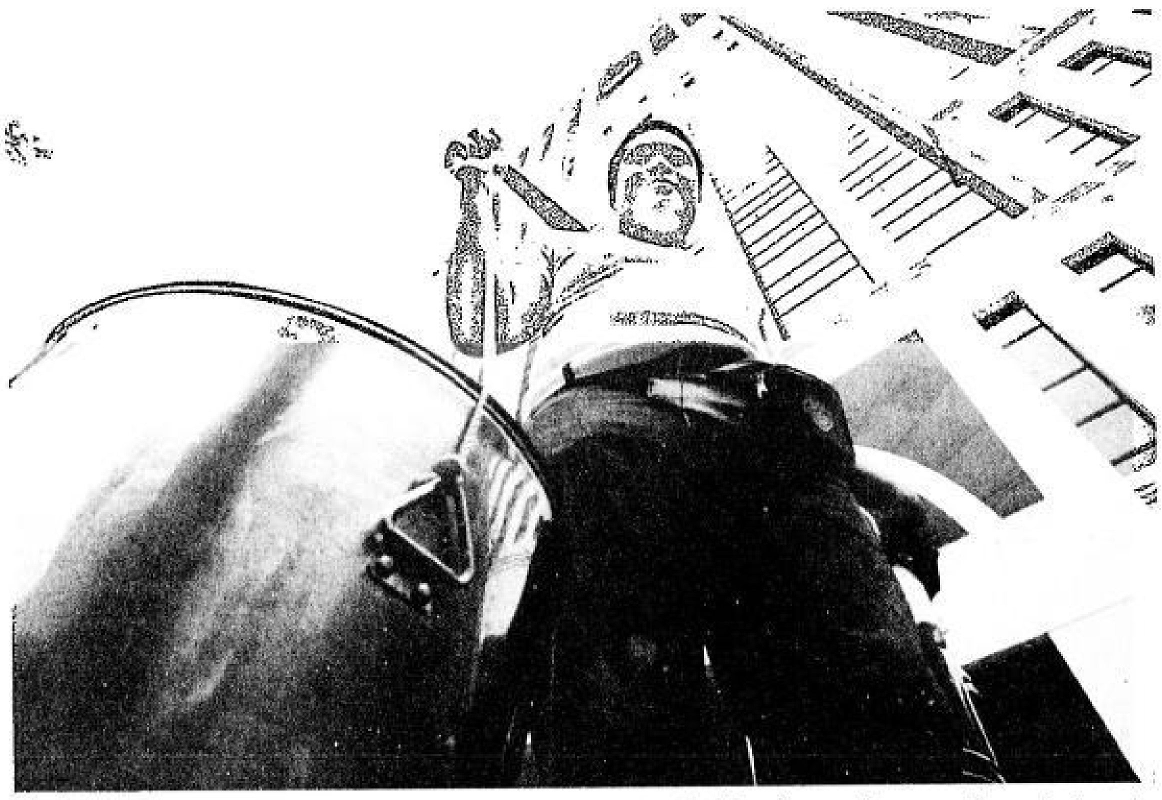
He does not have a monopoly on *taho* vending at City Hall, he said, but he has an edge because he stays the longest in the area, waiting for clients.

A good day for him is when he sells between 75 to 100 cups of the warm soy snack, earning him around P500 to P800—enough for him and his 12-year-old daughter, Josha.

"What I make is enough for our needs. It's enough for me to buy our food and give her a daily allowance of P50," said the single father who still has to cook and do the laundry after coming home from work.

One day though, Mang Jun hopes to witness history elsewhere by taking on a job abroad.

"I just want to try working overseas, even as a janitor. Life is tough here," he said.



MANG JUN Pulancos has been selling *taho* at the Makati City Hall for the past 13 years. He can be found in his usual spot from 7 to 10 in the morning and from 2:30 to 5 in the afternoon. During his longer than usual lunch break, the single father goes home to prepare lunch for his daughter, 12-year-old Josha. REM ZAMORA

Quiet nights ahead for QC residents

By DJ Yap

ATTENTION, KTV BAR OWNERS. Operating videoke machines outdoors and until midnight may soon be banned in Quezon City.

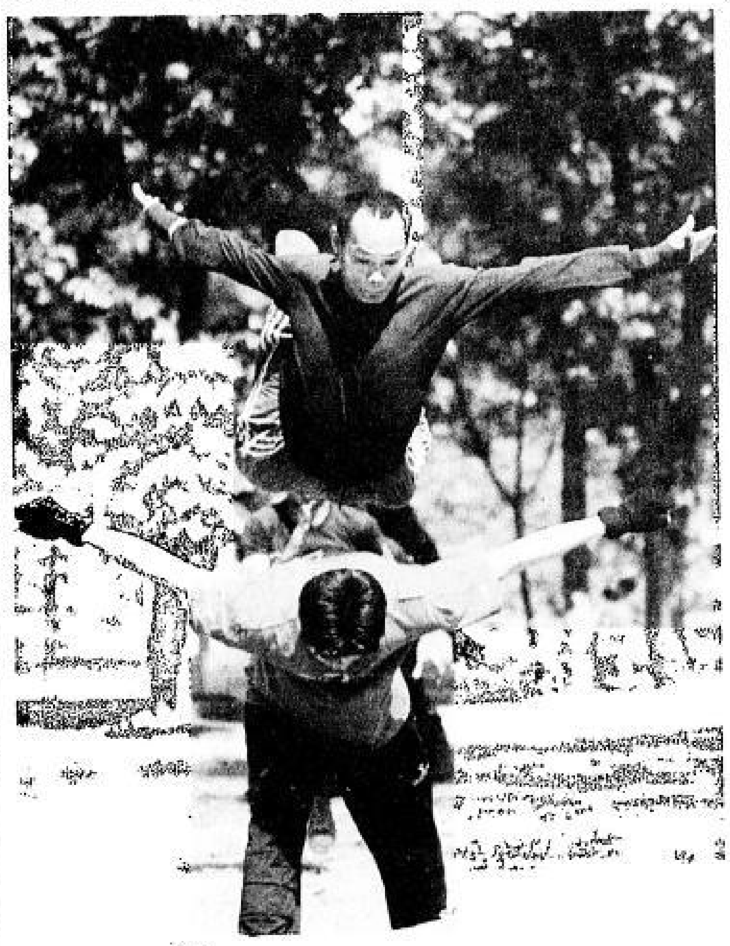
In a move to ensure quiet evenings for weary city dwellers, a city councilor has proposed an ordinance seeking to prohibit the use of videoke machines outside stores and restaurants in Quezon City beyond 9 p.m.

Councilor Franz Pumaren introduced the measure, citing the need to regulate the operations of KTV bars. He said loud songs performed by the patrons of such establishments often deprive residents of a good night's sleep.

Many KTV bars and restaurants in the city have installed videoke machines "even outside their own spaces to attract more customers," he said, referring to store owners' practice of setting up tables near sidewalks.

He said prohibiting the use of videoke machines outside the store premises after 9 p.m. would also help prevent crime. The councilor cited incidents in Metro Manila of brawls and assaults involving irate customers who did not like another person's rendition of a song.

Under the proposed measure, first time violators shall be fined P500 and P1,000 on subsequent offenses.



KEEPING IN SHAPE
Stunt men practice their moves at the Quezon City Memorial Circle—part of a rigorous daily routine to help them keep in shape for any offer to show their skills in a television show or movie that may come their way. RAFFY LERMA

Cops looking for link in 4 robberies

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IN JUST A SPAN OF THREE months, four robberies perpetrated by motorcycle-riding robbers whose victims were customers who had just withdrawn from banks were reported in Pasig City.

Police are investigating whether or not only one group was behind these attacks.

The Eastern Police District has already requested the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory for the cross matching of slugs and empty shells recovered in the four attacks.

EPD director, Chief Supt. Luizo Ticman, also told the INQUIRER they would intensify the deployment of at least 25 pairs of motorcycle-riding policemen following the series of highway robberies.

"We are following up the cases," he added.

In all of the four attacks which happened during business hours, the robbers apparently tailed their prey from the banks where they had withdrawn money, investigators said.

The robbers knew the victims were carrying big sums of money, leading investigators to believe the robbers could be getting some help from those privy to bank transactions.

The most recent incident happened on the traffic-prone Ortigas Avenue.

Businesswoman Ma. Teresa Rana had just withdrawn P200,000 from an Equitable-PCI Bank in Barangay Rosario, Pasig City on Thursday afternoon and was on her way to Mandaluyong City when two robbers approached her vehicle and took the money.

'Tatlong Bayani' Awards set on Feb. 5

By Emman Cena

ON FEB. 5, SIX PERSONS WILL BE standing proudly beside the eight-foot high Tatlong Bayani bronze sculpture in Mandaluyong City.

They will be the city's first ever recipients of the "Tatlong Bayani" —an award named after the monument immortalizing heroes Andres Bonifacio, Laureano Gonzales and Gen. Vicente "Kalentong" Leyva. The monument is located on A. Bonifacio Street in Barangay Hagdang Bato Itaas.

The awards are given in recognition of the achievements of residents, individuals and groups which have brought honor to themselves, the city and to the country through excellence in their respective fields.

There are three sets of awards, each with its own set of criteria for judging.

The Order of General Kalentong (named after General Leyva, an active member of the Katipunan) is the highest civilian award given to an individual (living or dead), institution or non-government organization for meritorious contribution to the community.

The Order of Laureano Gonzales Award is bestowed on residents who have excelled in their profession while the Order of Andres Bonifacio Award is given to people in public service or involved in law enforcement.

DID YOU KNOW

CONTRARY to common belief, the Philippine-American War did not break out on a small stone bridge in San Juan. History books used to say that on Feb. 4, 1899, Private William Grayson of the First Nebraska Volunteers fired at a Filipino who was walking on a bridge then known as "Balsahan." The Filipino was reportedly attempting to cross American lines. But the National Historical Institute declared in 2003 that the shot was fired at the corner of Silencio and Sociego Streets in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Suicide bomb attack near Pakistan mosque kills 15

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN—Pakistani police launched an investigation to learn the identity of a suicide bomber who killed 15 people in an attack over the weekend on a Shiite mosque in the northwest city of Peshawar, an official said Sunday.

Meanwhile, the chief minister of North West Frontier Province, of which Peshawar is the capital, called for calm Sunday amid fears the bombing could spark a wave of sectarian violence between majority Sunnis and minority Shiite Muslims.

No group has claimed responsibility for Saturday's bombing in downtown Peshawar that wounded more than 30 other people and came as Pakistan's Shiites began their most important annual festival, Ashoura, which has often been a target of anti-Shiite violence.

Chief Minister Akram Durrani asked the general public to demonstrate "patience and maintain religious discipline," state-run Associated Press of Pakistan news agency reported.

Most Muslims from the majority Sunni and minority Shiite sects coexist peacefully in Pakistan, but militant groups on both sides are blamed for sectarian attacks that claim scores of lives every year.

Heavily armed police and security forces in pickup trucks and armored personnel carriers patrolled streets in Shiite-dominated areas in Peshawar on Sunday, but no violence was reported.

Investigators have collected human remains and bomb shrapnel from the scene of the bombing, said Fayyaz Toru, head of investigation department of Peshawar police.

Toru would not speculate on who might be behind Saturday's attack in Peshawar or a motive, only describing it as a "terrorist act."

Police have recovered two legs, without a torso, from the bombing scene and DNA tests will be performed on them to trace the identity of the body, Toru said Sunday.

Police also found remnants of a suicide belt with pieces of metal and a grenade, said another senior police officer on Saturday who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to talk about the investigation.

The blast went off in a bazaar area about 200 yards from a mosque that was the starting point for the Shiite procession, which was canceled. The blast caused a power outage that left the city center in darkness, complicating rescue efforts.

Most of the victims were police and municipal officials who were clearing the route for the Shiite procession, police said.

The city's police chief, Malik Saad, was among the dead, said provincial police chief Sharif Virk.

Although there was no immediate claim of responsibility, suspicion will likely fall on Sunni extremists.

"The increasing sectarian violence in Iraq will definitely add tension here, and I think it is going to reunite sectarian elements, who have targeted each others' worship places in the past," said Talat Masood, a political and defense analyst.

Police officer Aziz Khan said he was nearby when the bomb went off and rushed to see if his colleagues had been hurt.

"I thought my eardrums had burst. Then there were flames and the people were in panic," he said.

AP

VALENTINE ROSE A Chinese model displays a gold rose in Nanjing, east China, Jan. 27. A jewelry company of Nanjing displayed gold roses for Valentine's Day. No further information on the gold rose was provided.

AP

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US may cite Israel for use of cluster arms

WASHINGTON—THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION will inform Congress on Monday that Israel may have violated agreements with the United States when it fired US-supplied cluster munitions into southern Lebanon during its fight with Hezbollah last summer, the State Department said Saturday.

The finding, though preliminary, has prompted a contentious debate within the administration over whether the United States should penalize Israel for its use of cluster munitions against towns and villages where Hezbollah had placed its rocket launchers.

Cluster munitions scatter tiny but deadly bomblets that explode over a wide area. The grenadelike munitions, tens of thousands of which have been found in southern Lebanon, have caused 30 deaths and 180 injuries among civilians since the end of the war, according to the UN Mine Action Service.

Midlevel officials at the Pentagon and the State Department have argued that Israel violated US prohibitions on using cluster munitions against populated areas, according to officials who described the deliberations. But other officials in both departments contend that Israel's use of the weapons was for self-defense and aimed at stopping the Hezbollah rocket attacks that killed 159 Israeli citizens and at worst was only a technical violation.

Any sanctions against Israel would be an extraordinary move by the Bush administration, a strong backer of Israel, and several officials said they expected little further action, if any, on the matter.

The State Department is required to notify Congress even of preliminary findings of possible violations of the Arms Export Control Act, the statute governing arms sales. It began an investigation in August.

Sean McCormack, the State Department spokesperson, said the notification to Congress would occur Monday but that a final determination about whether Israel violated the agreements on use of cluster bombs was still being debated.

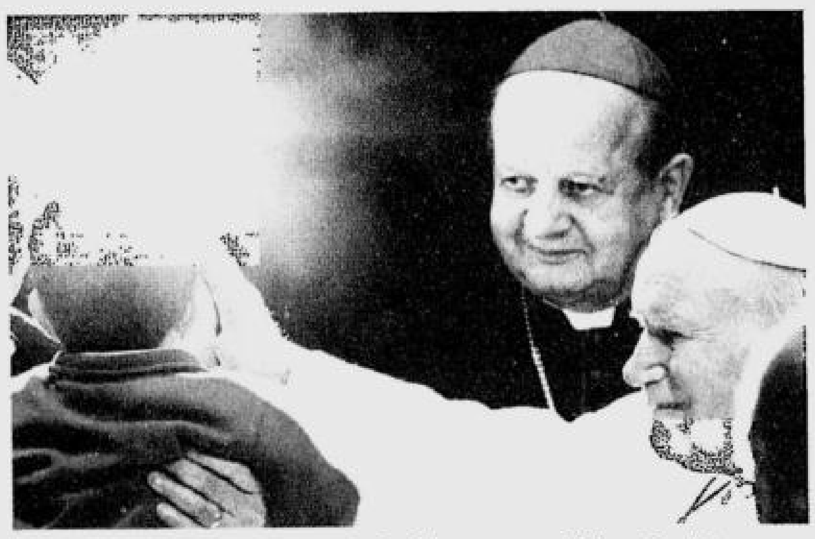
"It is important to remember the kind of war Hezbollah waged. They used innocent civilians as a way to shield their fighters," he said.

Even if Israel is found to be in violation, the statute gives President Bush discretion about whether to impose sanctions, unless Congress decides to take legislative action. Israel makes its own cluster munitions, so a cutoff of US supplies would have mainly symbolic significance.

Israel gave the State Department a dozen-page report late last year in which it acknowledged firing thousands of US cluster munitions into southern Lebanon but denied violating agreements that prohibit their use in civilian areas, the officials said.

Before firing at rocket sites in towns and villages, the Israeli report said, the Israeli military dropped leaflets warning civilians of the attacks. The report, which has not previously been disclosed, also noted that many of the villages were deserted because civilians had fled the fighting, the officials said. *NYT*

Aide: John Paul 'escaped' 100 times to go skiing



POPE JOHN Paul II, accompanied by his secretary Bishop Stanislaw Dziwisz (second from right), at the Vatican in this Dec. 15, 2004 photo. REUTERS

WARSAW, POLAND—THE LATE Pope John Paul II slipped away from his Swiss Guards to go skiing more than 100 times in the early years of his 26-year papacy, the pontiff's longtime personal secretary says in a book released in his native Poland.

It was hard at first for John Paul, an avid sportsman, to adjust to the confinement of the papacy, so he made informal "escapes" with his closest friends—three other Polish prelates, Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz says in his book, titled "Swiadectwo" ("The Testimony.") It was released Saturday in Poland.

John Paul made his first such outing two years into his papacy, on Jan. 2, 1981, setting out from the papal vacation residence at Castel Gandolfo in the car of the Rev. Jozef Kowalczyk "in order not to draw the attention of the Swiss Guards," who are charged with the pope's safety.

Kowalczyk, now papal nuncio to Poland, was driving; next to him was Rev. Tadeusz Rakoczy, "with a newspaper spread out pretending he was reading in order to 'hide' the Holy Father who was sitting in the back seat," Dziwisz wrote.

Kowalczyk "drove very carefully, respecting the speed limits and slowing down at crossings. You can imagine what would have happened if we had an accident or the car broke down."

They stopped at a small ski lift near the town of Ovindoli, where only a few people were skiing. John Paul joined them, unrecognized.

On the way back, the beaming pope exclaimed: "We did it!"

On many other skiing trips, the pope "behaved like an ordinary skier. He was dressed like the others, in a skiing suit, a woolen hat and sunglasses. He would stand in line with the others, but for security reasons, one of us would be in front, another one behind him. He used a ski pass," said Dziwisz, his closest aide and now the archbishop of Krakow.

"It seems hard to imagine, but no one recognized him. Who could suspect that the pope went skiing?"

Neither Vatican authorities nor journalists knew of the escapes, numbering more than 100, Dziwisz says. John Paul, elected in 1978, did much to change the ossified routine of the papacy.

On one occasion, a boy of about 10 stopped on the slope by the Rev. Rakoczy and glanced at a skier approaching them.

He froze for a moment and then cried out: "Pope, pope!"

Saving the situation, Rakoczy replied: "'What are you saying, silly? Hurry down, after your friends."

The papal party then left. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Iraq bombings kill 7 US soldiers

BAGHDAD—A series of roadside bombings killed seven more US soldiers across Iraq, the military announced Saturday, as two suicide car bombs in Baghdad left 15 people dead. The latest deaths of US troops were announced as the military revealed that militants disguised as American troops abducted and then executed four soldiers after a raid earlier this month in Iraq's shrine city of Karbala. Insurgents killed seven more US soldiers in a number of roadside bomb attacks since Thursday, the US military said. *AFP*

3rd day of Palestinian infighting

GAZA—A bomb blast damaged the Gaza home of a body guard of Fatah kingpin Mohammed Dahlan on Sunday, as gunmen from rival Palestinian factions exchanged fire at the start of a third day of infighting that has killed 21 people. The sounds of exploding grenades and automatic weapons fire echoed across Gaza City as gun battles raged through the night, witnesses said. But there were no casualties reported in either the bomb blast or the fighting. The clashes are the worst among Palestinians since the Islamist Hamas group rose to power a year ago, unseating President Mahmoud Abbas's once dominant Fatah. Efforts to forge a unity government between the two have so far failed. *Reuters*

World's oldest new mother lied

LONDON—A 67-year-old woman who last month became the world's oldest new mother told a British Sunday newspaper she lied to a US fertility clinic—saying she was 55—to get treatment. Carmela Bousada said in her first interview since she gave birth to twin boys on Dec. 29 said she sold her house in Spain to raise $59,000 to pay for in vitro fertilization at a California clinic, The News of the World reported. Bousada turned 67 this month, but said she told the Pacific Fertility Center in Los Angeles her age was 55—the clinic's cut off for treating single women, the report said. She said the clinic did not ask her for identification. *AP*

An appeal to Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, Jr., Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista, and our distinguished Councilors

Compel Federal Land to follow the Quezon City Zoning Ordinance in building the Capital Towers Project

We, the residents of Montgomery Place & Le Mariche hereby manifest our opposition to "The Capital Towers" project that will rise on E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave. in front of the National Children's Hospital & Trinity University:

1 **We oppose Federal Land's request for an Exception to the Commercial 2 (C2) classification of the area under the Amended Quezon City Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.** This will allow them to build beyond the prescribed height and density limits of our area which is of great concern to the surrounding residential communities. Right now, Federal Land plans to build 3 towers - one 38 storey and two 41 storey structures - totaling more than 1,300 new units on a 0.88 hectare lot.

2 **We oppose Federal Land's request for an Exception to Article VI, Section 4, No. 13 of the Quezon City Zoning Ordinance which requires a 1:1 ratio between parking spaces and condominium units.** They want a 1:3 ratio claiming that their target market is composed primarily of public transportation users. Given that their smallest unit costs Php65,000.00 per sqm, it's unlikely that anyone willing to spend that much does not own or will not aspire for a car.

3 **We are convinced that the project is hastily planned and that the impact on traffic, parking, flooding, water, sewage, soil cave-in, natural light, air, privacy and the effects of construction to our communities have been de-emphasized.** We have sat through presentations during the public hearings and we believe that FL's findings are incomplete and inadequate. We want their technical studies to be assessed by our own consultants.

4 **We protest in the strongest possible terms the blatant pre-selling of the project while our environmental concerns have not been addressed.** To date, the HLURB has certified that no License to Sell has been issued. The HLURB, in a Notice of Violation dated 30 November 2006, strongly reprimanded Federal Land and fined them. Despite this, they continue to market the project in invitation-only gatherings.

Recently, officials of certain barangays in District IV signed a manifesto in favor of the Capital Towers because of its "monetary benefits." **These benefits were merely alleged and never substantiated nor quantified by Federal Land or Barangay Kalusugan during several public hearings held at QC Hall.** The QC Zoning Ordinance in no uncertain terms, considers paramount the rights of existing communities to public health, safety and welfare. Thus, the burden is on Federal Land to prove that the Capital Towers project upholds these rights.

To summarize, by granting the exception, Federal Land will be allowed to build a massive development on E. Rodriguez Sr. which lacks sustainable infrastructure. We already experience air pollution, traffic jams, and flash floods on a regular basis. Adding 1,300 new households will adversely affect the public health, safety, and welfare of existing and future residents in this congested area.

We urge the QC Council led by **Vice-Mayor Herbert Bautista & Majority Floor Leader Ariel Inton Jr.** to vote on the basis of Responsible Development:

- **Deny all applications for permits of The Capital Towers as it is currently planned or conceptualized.**
- **Deny the application for the Certificate of Exception from the QC Zoning Ordinance.**
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No stalling Unity Congress—Eala

By June Navarro

NO AMOUNT OF DIVERSION CAN STALL THE SAMAhang Basketbol ng Pilipinas from completing its mission of uniting the country's divergent cage groups.

PBA commissioner Noli Eala, the designated SBP spokesperson, yesterday said the Unity Congress would push through as scheduled on Feb. 5 despite another changing of the guards in the hierarchy of the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Controversial athletics chief Go Teng Kok took over the BAP's helm as president, Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte Sr. was elected chair and Davao Rep. Douglas Cagas and former sports commissioner Tisha Abundo were chosen co-vice chairs in polls held Saturday.

Go became the third president of the BAP since the country was suspended by the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) almost two years ago.

"The Unity Congress will push through regardless of the situation," said Eala. "We're also inviting the (new) BAP officials to attend, and I hope they will."

The congress, set at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City, is one of the two remaining requirements the SBP has to fulfill under the joint communiqué—endorsed by the Fiba last year in Tokyo—between rivals Pilipinas Basketball and the BAP.

Eala pointed out that as far as the SBP is concerned, Estrada is still the BAP's representative to the three-man unification panel. The rest of the members are business tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan as mediator and Junjun Capistrano of PB.

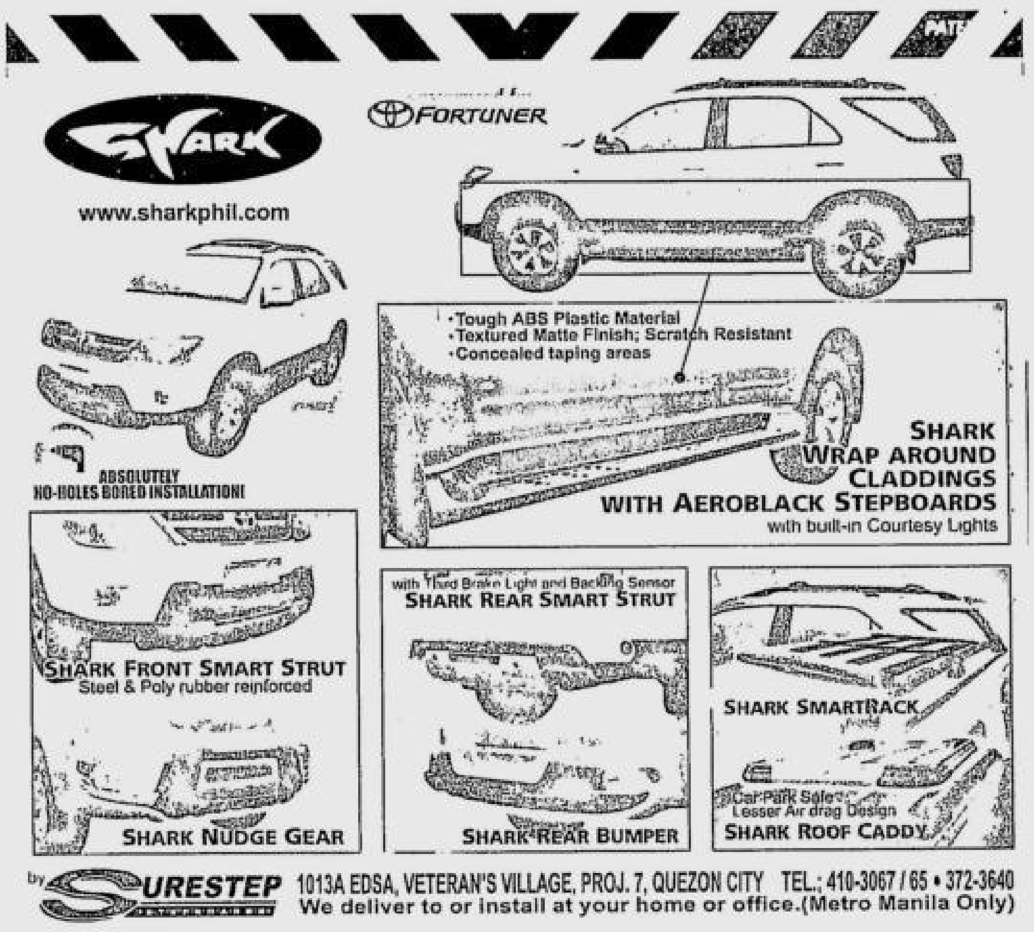
"Unless they (new BAP officials) officially notify us of the change, we still consider Sen. Estrada as part of the panel," said Eala.

The BAP executive board said it would meet not later than tomorrow for the new set of officers to get acquainted with the unification process.

"We have to recognize the agreements entered into by (Joey) Lina and Estrada," said Go. "But first, we have to study the documents and see if the panel made mistakes during the course of completing the process."

Lina was part of the original cast of the three-man panel along with former PB president Bernie Atienza and Pangilinan.

NO/ A32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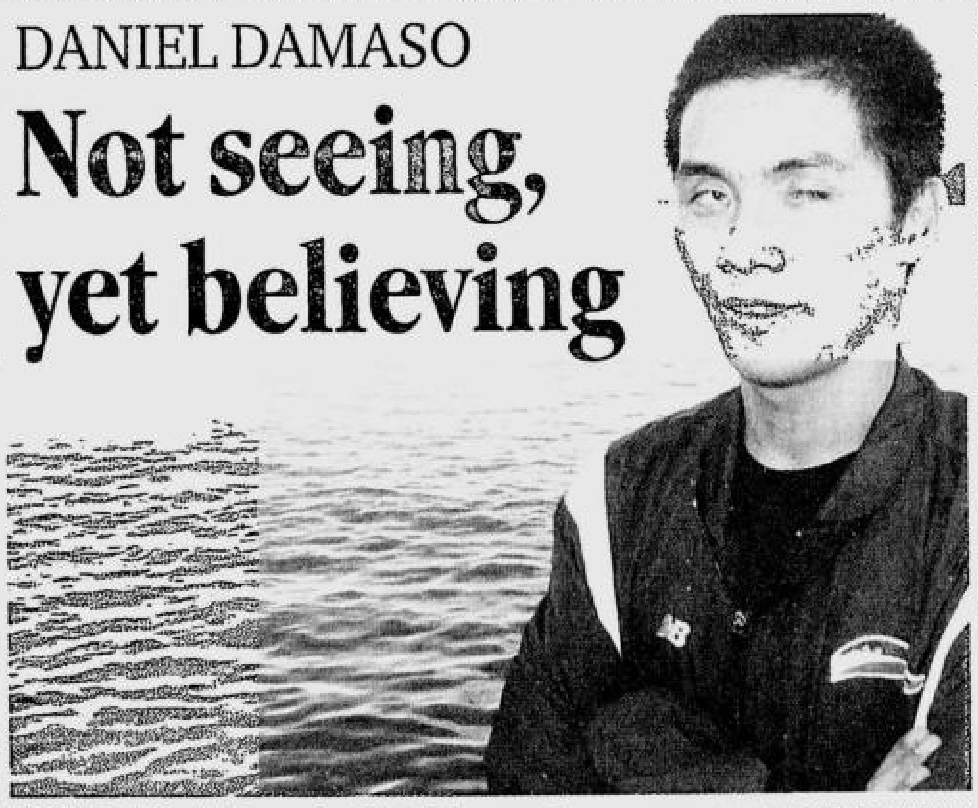
DANIEL DAMASO

Not seeing, yet believing



BEACH BOY: Daniel Damaso Jr. at his training ground. NINO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

A gold medal fished in the dark

By Joanna Los Baños
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—FROM THE DARKNESS OF the world he was born into, Daniel Damaso Jr., found a way to carve out a shining success story.

Having been born with only a 10-0 vision, the 21-year-old Damaso has experienced all sorts of discrimination since he was young.

"It was as if I had no right to live," said the gold medalist in the 9th Fespic Games (Far East and South Pacific Games Federation for the disabled), the sports organization for the differently abled in Asia and South Pacific.

Cut off from the activities by other people who could not grasp that he, too, had capabilities, Don—as his relatives and friends call him—would often allow his emotions to get the better of him.

"I got angry and sad, but I don't mind them now," he said.

Thus, he had the need for an outlet. And he often found it every time he sneaked out of the family home in coastal Barangay Pigcale and walked a few meters to the beach. It was from this regular search for a refuge that led Don to the sport of swimming.

Don's mother, Ma. Elena, 43, related that when he was about nine years old, "he would go out of the house, without us noticing him, to swim with his friends on the beach."

Aware that her son did not have a clear vision, she was scared that "something bad might happen to him."

It was this worry, this motherly instinct of protectiveness that would prod Elena to look for her son at the beach every time she noticed he wasn't around in the house. And from this constant attempts to hide from his mother, Don developed his swimming speed.

"When Don sensed my presence, he would swim as fast as he could to the shore nearest our house," she said laughing, adding that for five years that served as Don's way to hone his skills.

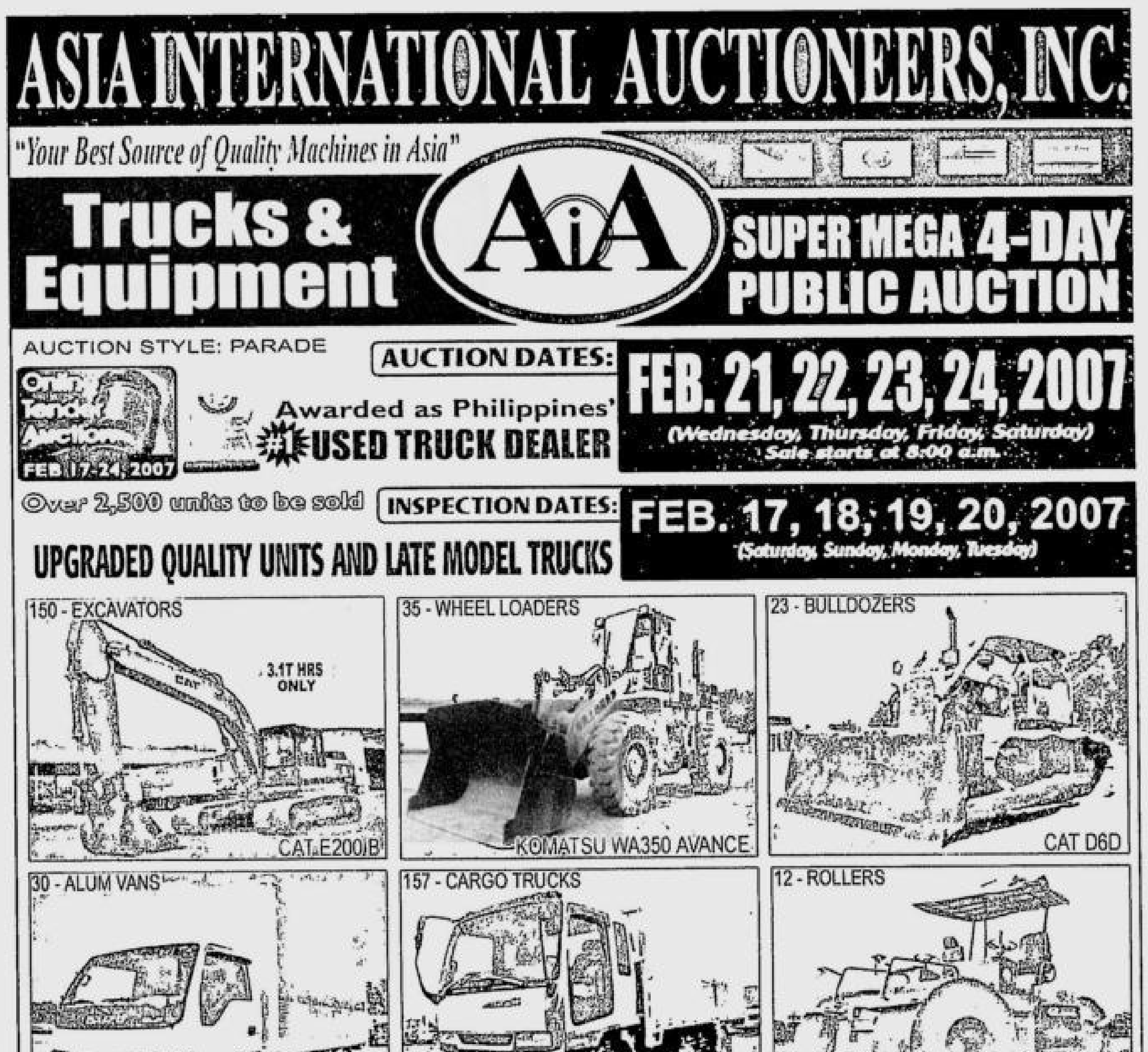
That makeshift training has made Don into the athlete he is now.

"Even if I am handicapped, I don't feel it," he said.

Don said he did not have formal training and his swimming skills were not yet competitive when he was discovered in a swimming competition, conducted by the Philippine Sports Association for the Differently-Abled (Philspada), in Tabaco City last 2000.

In 2003, he was asked to train in Manila for

NOT/ A30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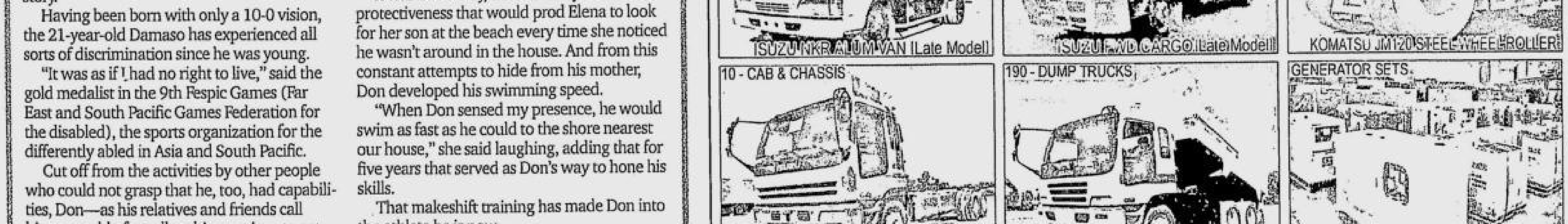
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He's no Joe, but Marvin's just as good

By Jasmine W. Payo

HE'S DEFINITELY NO JOE DEVANCE, BUT POINT GUARD MARVIN CRUZ HAS proven to be just as vital for Toyota Otis in the ongoing PBL Silver Cup.

GAME TUESDAY
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
3 p.m.—Henkel Sista vs Mail and More

Only 5-foot-8, Cruz again delivered another all-around performance last week as the Sparks sealed an outright semifinal berth with a 73-67 decision of the Harbour Centre Port Masters.

"He's intelligent, courageous and a great leader on the court," said Toyota Otis coach Louie Alas of Cruz, who scattered a game-high 18 points on top of six rebounds and three assists.

The win was actually the fifth straight for the Sparks, who started poorly in the tournament as they felt the loss of the 6-7 Fil-Am ace Devance, the Most Valuable Player of the last conference.

Devance flew to the United States before the start of the tournament to be with his sick mother and to complete his papers for another crack at the PBA Rookie Draft this year.

Cruz, a recruit from the disbanded Granny Goose, needed little time to settle with his new team, and Alas said his new standout has more tricks up his sleeves.

"He can do better than what he showed in the game (against Harbour)," said Alas of Cruz, who earned Player of the Week honors from the league scribes.

Cruz, who's also the focal point in the University of the Philippines' campaign in the UAAP, will be at the helm again in Toyota Otis' best-of-five semifinal series versus Harbour Centre next week.

Vengeful crack

Taking the longer route to the Final Four, the Port Masters gained a vengeful crack at the Sparks after hurdling the Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala squad in overtime, 86-83, in their quarterfinal encounter last Saturday.

Hapee-PCU, which also earned an outright semifinal slot, will be colliding against the winner of the other quarterfinal tussle between Henkel Sista and Mail and More.

The Super Sealers forged a decider with the Comets with a 79-72 triumph, also Saturday.

TOYOTA OTIS

MARVIN Cruz (left) escapes the defense of Cebuana Lhuillier's Macky Escalona for an undergoal stab in a recent game. RYAN LIM

Pacman to sign Chi contract in US

BARRING ANY LAST-MINUTE CHANGE, Filipino ring hero Manny Pacquiao will leave for the United States on Wednesday to confer with promoter Bob Arum and sign the contract for his April 28 showdown with South Korean Chi In-jin in Macau, China.

Pacquiao was originally slated to depart last Friday to be at ringside for yesterday's Jorge Arce fight in Anaheim, California, but sources said he was feeling a little under the weather due to numerous commitments on Thursday and decided to stay home.

Pacquiao, sources also said, will be accompanied in the trip by wife Jinkee, lawyer Geng Gacal and adviser Michael Koncz.

Renowned international referee Bruce McTavish, who had talked to Pacquiao this week, also confirmed that the GenSan lefty would indeed leave on Wednesday.

Another source, however, indicated that Pacquiao might just feel the urge to leave and decide to fly tonight on a Philippine Airlines flight to Los Angeles.

"Manny is always like that. If he feels like travelling, he'll do it," said a source who requested not to be named. "If he feels like things are not conducive to a trip, he'll just scrap it altogether."

Earlier, Arum announced that Pacquiao would be at ringside for his pal Arce's fight in Anaheim against Julio Ler, whom Arce beat by unanimous decision yesterday.

Sources said Pacquiao will sign the fight contract after Jan. 31, which marks the end of his managerial contract with American Shelly Finkel.

Meanwhile, Filipino Mercito Gesta's fight against Mexican Barbaro Zepeda was scrapped yesterday due to unknown reasons.

The match-up was included in the list of fights distributed by Top Rank last week.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

4th WNCAA nat'l games a 3-way race

TEAMS FROM CALABARZON, CENTRAL Luzon and Metro Manila show the way after two days of competition in the 4th WNCAA and 1st MNCAA National Championship Games in Baguio City.

NCR-A, represented by WNCAA 37th season Senior A champion Lyceum of the Philippines, downed Cordillera Autonomous Region (University of the Cordilleras), 49-42, at the University of Baguio gym yesterday to lead WNCAA's Group A.

University of Perpetual Help-Laguna gave Calabarzon its first Group B win after stopping Central Luzon (Holy Angel U), 68-52.

Central Luzon earlier won over NCR-B (Miriam College), 71-59.

In WNCAA volleyball, Calabarzon and Central Luzon remained undefeated in two Group B games while NCR-A and CAR have one win each in Group A.

Calabarzon outlasted Ilocos (University of Luzon), 25-17, 25-18, 25-20, and NCR-B (World Citi Colleges), 25-23, 25-21, 25-23.

Central Luzon, on the other hand, beat NCR-B, 25-27, 25-19, 25-20, 25-21, before dumping Ilocos, 25-17, 25-10, 25-21.

Ilocos, a 97-90 winner over NCR (San Beda-Alabang), and CAR, which beat Central Luzon (Centro Escolar U-Malolos), 102-90, pace the MNCAA national cage finals.

ALL'S WELL: The Fespic Games gold medalist with parents Daniel Sr. and Ma. Elena and a younger brother at the wharf in Legazpi City. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Not seeing, yet believing

From page A29

the 2nd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Para Games in Hanoi, Vietnam.

In 2005, he won a gold and a silver medal in the 3rd Asean Para Games at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

But Don admitted that his ultimate goal was not really to become a swimming champion.

"I want to be a teacher to blind children to help and encourage them."

He is a fourth year high school student at the Special Education for Children with Disabilities (Sped) Center in Barangay Rawis and his favorite are subjects related to science and technology.

Don's father, Daniel, 43, a carpenter-mason, said he is proud of what his son has accomplished.

"I am very happy that even if he is handicapped and cannot see, he brought home a gold medal," he said of his son, the second of eight children.

Last Jan. 18, Damaso was given a citation by the Philippine Sportswriters Association, not only for battling through the darkness, but for his willingness to help other people see the light. And believe in himself.

Iloilo to host 44th Southern Ladies golf; solid cast seen

SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S FINEST players take on a sprinkling of foreign bidders and club standouts when the 44th Southern Ladies golf championships come off the wraps Feb. 7 at the Iloilo Golf and Country Club.

The three-day team championships, to be played under the four-to-play, three-to-count format and scored using the Molave system, stakes fabulous prizes, according to the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines.

Crystal Shin, a 14-year-old from South Korea, won the individual event by 14 points over Lora Roberto in last year's event held at Del Monte in Bukidnon. Park Sung-hyun, another Korean, placed third.

The other winners were Gilda Medestomas in Class A, Celine Menes (B), Nicole Baretto (C) and Milou Tan (D).

Officials of the host club's ladies chapter have assured players of a pleasant stay as the event is being held as part of the Iloilo club's celebration of its centennial year.

Registration deadline is Feb. 5. Fee is P1,800.

With Musong R. Castillo

Hitting 2 birds with 1 stroke

IT'S LIKE HITTING TWO BIRDIES WITH one stroke.

A golf tournament that seeks to promote the country as a golf destination and help Gawad Kalinga build more homes for the poor tees off today at Sherwood Hills Golf Club in Trece Martires, Cavite.

Organizers of the first Ambassador's Golf Cup, hosted by the Philippine Ambassador to the United States Willie Gaa, said the 18-hole event will ultimately showcase the country's finest golf courses through a parallel campaign of the Department of Tourism.

Proceeds of the tournament will benefit the Gawad Kalinga, an organization launched in 2001 to provide 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities in poverty-stricken areas in the Philippines over a seven-year span.

The Jack Nicklaus-designed, par-72 Sherwood Hills will be the maiden venue of the event which will also be held across the country in succeeding years.

Gaa is to lead a field of 144 players, 90 of them *balikbayans* from the US, in the San Miguel Corp.-sponsored tournament that stakes a Jaguar car as a hole-in-one prize.

The Blind Callaway scoring system will decide the winners in the different divisions. Tee-off starts at 8:30 a.m, following the hitting of ceremonial drives led by Gaa, Transportation and Communication Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Philippine Retirement Authority chair Edgardo Aglipay.

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GTK on a 'love' mission for basketball

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

WHAT COULD THE MAN DO?

The uncertainty did not heighten.

But neither did the election of the villainous Go Teng Kok (GTK) as president of the Basketball Association of the Philippines immediately lend hope to achieving the national basketball unity strictly demanded by the international basketball federation, Fiba.

Go's elevation as BAP head, several sectors claimed, was equal to being stuck in the same old muddy hole.

Others insisted GTK could even add to the current complications.

* * *

GTK will not like this. But it has got to be reported here that his election, following the sacking of Sen. Jinggoy Estrada as BAP president, was received with a chorus of sneers.

A sampler, from a sports fan, as texted to Ms Rhea Navarro: "Kawawa. Poor GTK. He'll end up hanging himself with a rope from the BAP. Well, he should also tie his hands and feet with the same rope for the good of RP sports."

From an incensed female basketball supporter, upon hearing of Go's election: "They're all there for selfish interests. Kung sila pa rin, if Fiba continues to listen to them, we're better off being suspended eternally. It's an insult, an obscenity. Imagine, we are 87 million Pinoys and our sports leaders are Go, Lim, Tan?"

* * *

Yes, as perceived by many, Go was the last man who could break the national basketball impasse.

Of course, Go himself knows that he's not the most popular sports leader hereabouts.

But the man is not exactly unlinked, as far as basketball is concerned.

GTK was the manager of the RP national team, coached by Robert Jaworski, which won the silver medal in the 1990 Beijing Asian Games.

Armed with a fat bank book, a mind of his own, Go had dared to skirmish with several fellow sports leaders.

Yesterday, in a heart-to-heart talk with the INQUIRER, Go swore he has put all these quarrels behind him.

He's now working singularly for unity in Philippine basketball, something which might require a miracle man to attain.

* * *

Here's that brief but compelling interview:

Why did you accept the BAP presidency?

GTK: To me, *sa akin*, really, I'm not here for the position. I promise to step down immediately after I'm through with my mission.

What mission?

GTK: Only one: unity.

But aren't you being used by Graham Lim?

GTK: Of course, not. No way. You know me, from the start, *hindi ako papahawak kay* Graham, he can't dictate to me.

So who asked you to go for the BAP presidency?

GTK: Lito Alvarez (BAP deputy sec-gen, director)

What about Mr. Alvarez?

GTK: He's also for unity. He wants all these problems to be solved.

But they say you could even add to the problems.

GTK: I know I have enemies. But I have forgiven them all, including that man who shot and tried to kill me. I pray for all of them now.

What can we expect from the New Go Teng Kok?

GTK: If I can't help in lifting the Fiba suspension, I promise to resign from all my position in Philippine sports.

Can we take your word on this?

GTK: You know me. I'll do what I've promised.

Thank you.

* * *

Again: Why Go Teng Kok, of all people?

This may sound totally unlinked, but in yesterday's joyous homily during the morning Mass at the Ledesma Hall of the Makati Medical Center, the priest expounded on Love.

He mentioned something about Jesus being belittled as incapable of great things because "He was only a carpenter."

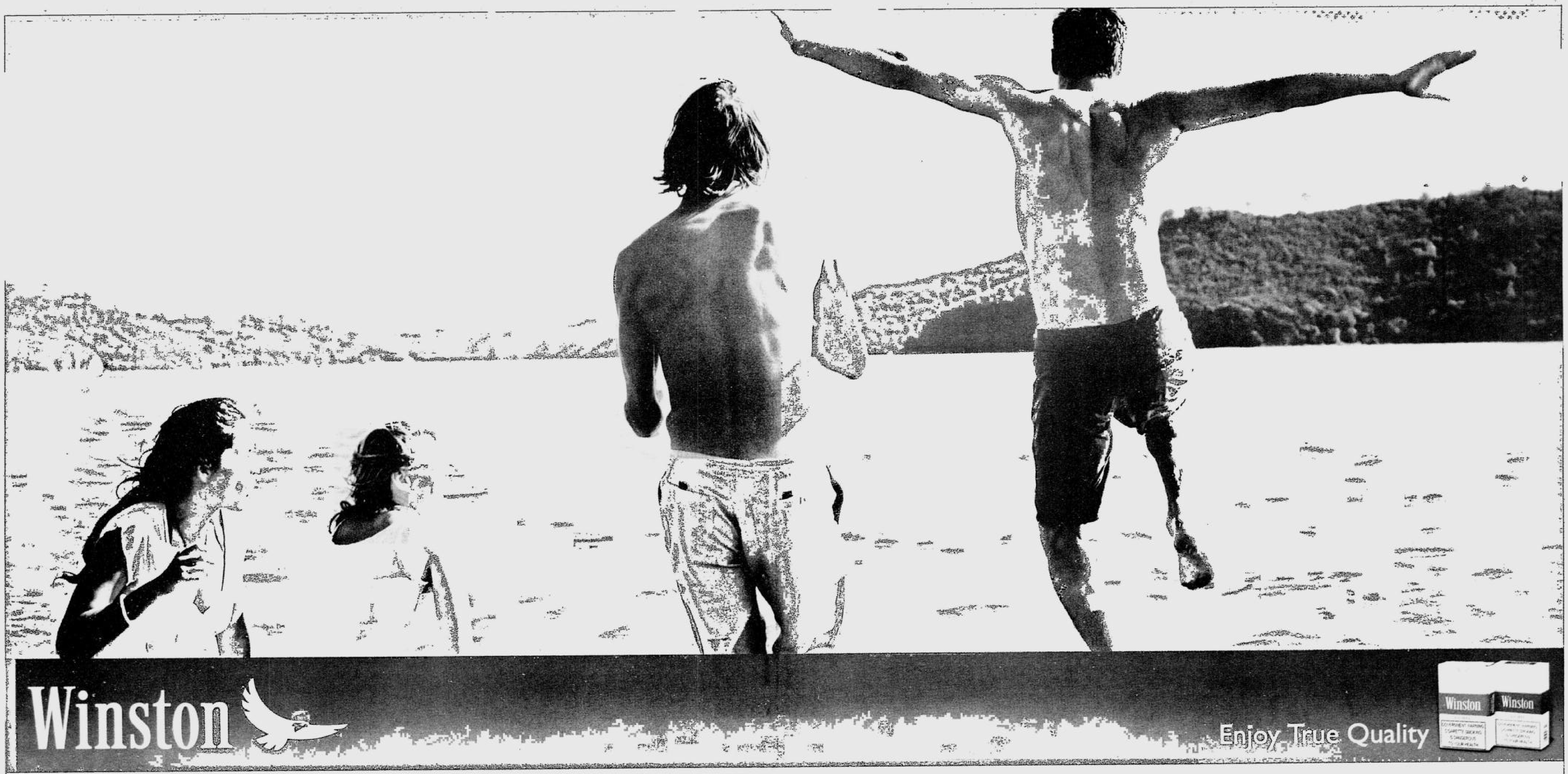
The thing here, explained the priest, is that God hardly cares who you are; it's the good things that you do that truly matter here.

Love is the key to all the goodness here on earth.

GTK did not have to say it, but with the urgency of his avowed mission, it cannot be mistaken that, this time, he's on a Love mission.

In fact, he made the vow on behalf of beleaguered Philippine basketball from the St. Luke's hospital, at the bedside of his mother who's stricken with cancer.

Let's all thank GTK, pray for both his mission and his dear mother.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SPORTS

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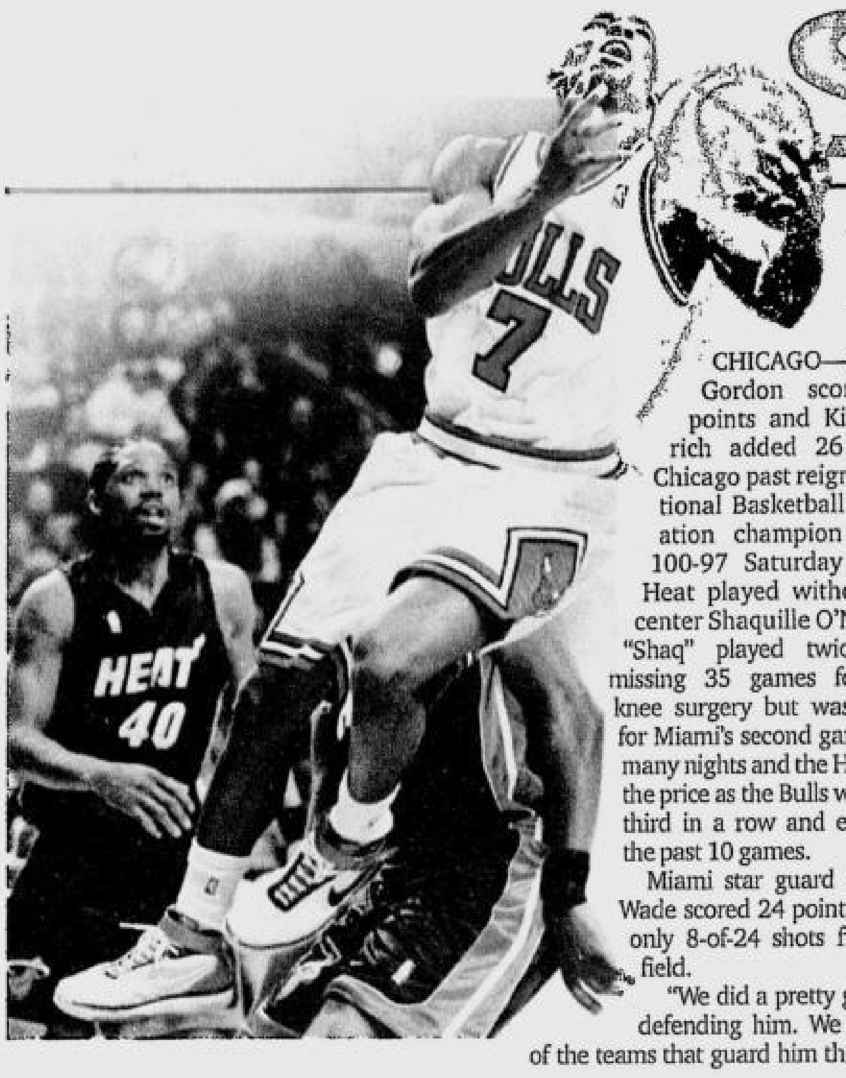


Bulls, Mavs triumph

CHICAGO—BEN Gordon scored 34 points and Kirk Hinrich added 26 to lift Chicago past reigning National Basketball Association champion Miami 100-97 Saturday as the Heat played without star center Shaquille O'Neal.

"Shaq" played twice after missing 35 games following knee surgery but was absent for Miami's second game in as many nights and the Heat paid the price as the Bulls won their third in a row and eighth in the past 10 games.

Miami star guard Dwyane Wade scored 24 points but hit only 8-of-24 shots from the field.

"We did a pretty good job defending him. We are one of the teams that guard him the best in the league," Gordon said. "Kirk did a great job on Dwyane. "

Wade, a Chicago native and 2006 NBA Finals Most Valuable Player, averages only 16.8 points against the Bulls—his lowest total against any NBA rival—and manages only an average of 11.9 a game in Chicago.

"We did a good job on him but then you look at his final line and it's 24 points and eight rebounds and eight assists," Chicago coach Scott Skiles said. "Somehow he still managed to make some unbelievable plays with our guys.

In Dallas, Texas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 32 points and pulled down 11 rebounds here Saturday, lifting the Dallas Mavericks past Sacramento, 106-104, for their 13th home triumph in a row.

The German star sank a key jump shot with 27 seconds to play to spark the Mavericks to a 36-9 record, trailing only Phoenix (35-8) in the fight for the NBA's best record.

"The men are working hard and they gutted this one out and I am really proud of them," Mavericks coach Avery Johnson said.

The Mavericks had an eight-game win streak snapped Thursday at Chicago and had not lost back-to-back games since starting the season 0-4.

"To lose two in a row would really be disheartening, so after we lose, everybody is pretty much like a self-check," Mavericks guard Jason Terry said.

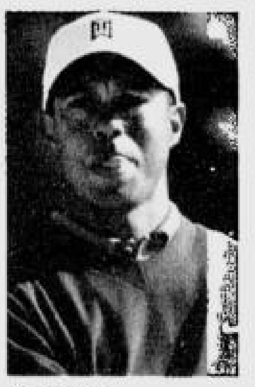
Meanwhile, Zach Randolph had 42 points and 12 boards to lead the Portland Trail Blazers to a wild 135-132 double overtime win over the Memphis Grizzlies.

Vince Carter scored 40 points as the New Jersey Nets beat the Denver Nuggets, 112-102.

Andre Iguodala had 24 points as the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Atlanta Hawks, 104-89.

Jermaine O'Neal scored 21 points as the Indiana Pacers won their third straight game with a 102-84 win over the Toronto Raptors. *AFP*

Tiger looms large behind Buick golf tyro leaders



WOODS REUTERS

SAN DIEGO—A TWO-shot lead over Tiger Woods can hardly be considered a cushion. In the final round of the Buick Invitational it's only a shade better than no lead at all.

Another new name reached the top of the leaderboard Saturday, but he will be aiming for an old routine—trying to hold off a familiar figure at Torrey Pines.

Australian rookie Andrew Buckle closed out his 4-under 68 with a 15-foot birdie putt that gave him a share of the lead with fellow rookie Brandt Snedeker.

Two shots behind and casting an enormous presence on the leaderboard was Tiger Woods, who played bogey-free on the South Course for a 69 that left him in prime position to capture his seventh straight PGA Tour victory.

Buckle and Snedeker, who shot 74, have made a combined 20 starts on the PGA Tour. They will play in the final group with Kevin Sutherland, whose only PGA Tour victory came 20 miles up the road at La Costa five years ago.

When he finished his round, the 24-year-old Buckle was told he would be playing in the last group with Woods. That changed when Sutherland hit a hybrid onto the par-5 18th and two-putted for birdie and a 70 to finish one shot off.

"I'm not playing with Tiger?" Buckle said later. "Beautiful. I would have been nervous." *AP*

Federer still unbeatable

Bags Australian Open title without dropping a set

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—ROGER Federer captured his 10th Grand Slam singles title without dropping a set at the Australian Open, beating Fernando Gonzalez of Chile, 7-6 (2), 6-4, 6-4, in Sunday's championship match.

Federer improved his winning streak to a career-best 36 matches and won a major without dropping a set for the first time.

The 25-year-old Swiss star became the first man in the Open era to twice win three straight majors and has won six of the last seven Grand Slam titles—his only loss was in the French Open final to Rafael Nadal.

By reaching the final, Federer tied Jack Crawford's record of playing in seven consecutive finals at the majors, set in 1934.

Gonzalez, seeded 10th and into his first Grand Slam final, kept Federer under pressure with his big forehand, but could not quite match the all-court game of the player who has been ranked No. 1 for 156 consecutive weeks.

He broke Federer in the ninth game, the first breakpoint chance of the match, and had two set points in the next game but failed to convert.

Federer broke back to level at 5-5 and then had four set points in the next game before Gonzalez held in a game that went to deuce seven times and forced a tiebreaker.

ROGER Federer celebrates his 10th Grand Slam crown. AP

Federer dominated the tiebreaker, jumping out to a 5-0 lead after winning a challenge against an incorrect baseline call to have the first point replayed.

Gonzalez had conceded only two points on serve in the second set until Federer broke for a 4-3.

Federer fired an ace to close the second set and broke Gonzalez in the seventh game of the third. He earned triple championship point with a forehand winner and closed it with a backhand down the line.

He fell to his back, rolled over and then got up, hit a ball into the stands and took a bow. He held both arms high before throwing his wristband into crowd.

Federer had 45 winners and only 19 unforced errors, and dropped only one service game in the 2-hour, 20-minute match.

The first set lasted 65 minutes, two minutes longer than Serena Williams needed to win the women's final 6-1, 6-2 over Maria Sharapova on Saturday afternoon.

Williams stayed in Melbourne Sunday and was at Rod Laver Arena watching the men's final.

Meanwhile, Daniel Nestor of Canada and Elena Likhovtseva of Russia claimed the mixed doubles title.

They defeated Belarussian pair Max Mirnyi and Victoria Azarenka, 6-4, 6-4, in the final in 79 minutes.

Nestor secured victory by punching a volley winner on match point.

"It's a great feeling to have won today," Nestor said.

It was the second final defeat in as many days for Mirnyi after he and Jonas Bjorkman were beaten in the men's doubles final on Saturday by American brothers Mike and Bob Bryan. *Reuters*

No stalling . . .

From page A29

After helping the panel craft the SBP's articles of incorporation and the constitution, Lina quit as BAP head and was replaced by Estrada, who was later dislodged when BAP officials charged him of deciding unilaterally for the group.

On their presence in the unity congress, Go said much would depend on the outcome of the BAP's emergency meeting.

"We have no choice but to make a decision based on what the documents will tell us," said Go. "The congress is just a week away.

"If we are convinced that the entire process was being done in accordance with the communiqué, then we would show up in the Unity Congress. If not, then we would have to call the attention of the Fiba."

'I just have large breasts,' Serena tells critics

MELBOURNE—AUSTRALIAN Open champion Serena Williams has hit back at critics who said she was too fat going into the first Grand Slam of the season, using colorful language to defend her body shape.

After proving them wrong by winning the trophy, thrashing top seed Maria Sharapova in the final, the 25-year-old American said people who thought she was unfit did not understand her body.

"It was outrageous," she said of the criticism about her weight.

"I was looking in the mirror today and my waist is still 28 inches.

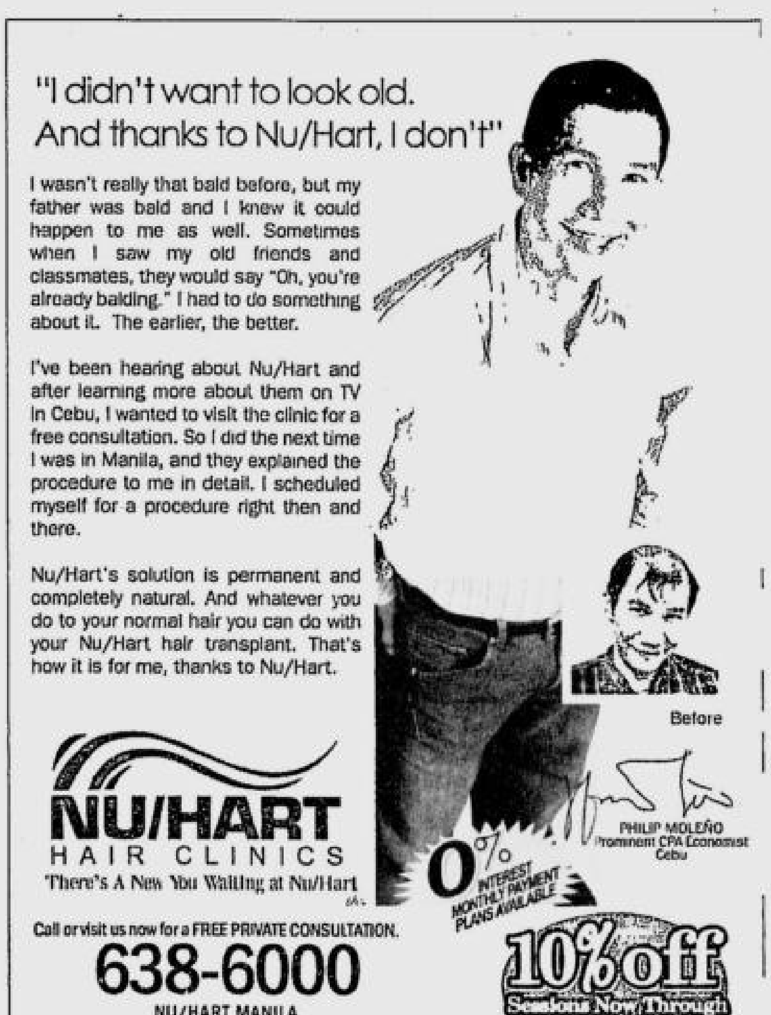
"I think it's all because I have a large bosom and a large ass. I have a large ass and it always just looks like I'm bigger than the rest of the girls.

"I've been the same weight for I don't know how long and I could lose 20 pounds and I'm still going to have these knockers."

Williams lists her weight in the Women's Tennis Association official guide as 135 pounds.

She said she had been fit throughout the tournament but suffered a number of health problems that affected her early matches.

"I'm definitely fit," she said. *AFP*



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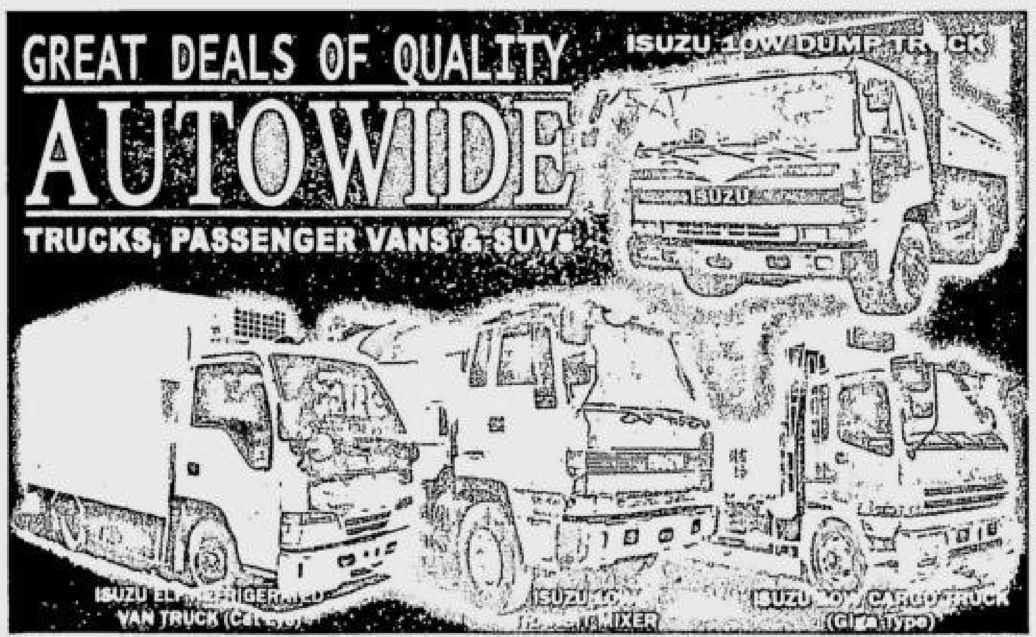

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SPORTSWATCH

76 fights up in Makati today

THE COUNTRY'S TOP COCKFIGHTERS DISPUTE the championship and the winner's prize of P500,000 in a special 5-cock derby starting at 5 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum. The event, backed by B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador, is hosted by Boy Royo of Laguna. The list of participants includes reigning World Slasher Cup champions Patrick Antonio and Jenjen Arayata, SJC International Derby runners-up Pol Estrellado, Lito Orillaza and Rudy Salud, Gov. Ito Ynares and Boy Jiao. Meanwhile, the WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. will hold the Makati International 8-Cock Super Derby on Feb. 5, 7 and 9.

'Nat'l Rambulan' launched

THE INNOVATIVE NATIONAL RAMBULAN 8-COCK Derby was launched yesterday by the management of the San Juan Coliseum, in cooperation with Sagupaan Complexor 3000. The event, offering a guaranteed prize of P10.5 million and slated March 1, 3, 5, 19, 21 and 23, will be hosted by promoter Butch Nunez. Entry fee is P11,000. Cockers and breeders may register starting today. Meanwhile, the third leg of Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-Cock Derby series sizzles on Wednesday.

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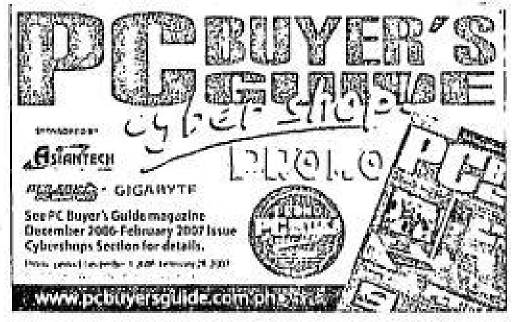
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DENR warns of severe water crisis by 2010

Blames lack of cohesive gov't plan

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINES FACES A SEVERE CRISIS IN FRESH water supply as early as 2010 and this can set off a different war for the most important resource, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has warned.

A DENR study released Friday estimated that only 1,907 cubic meters of fresh water are available to each Filipino a year, putting the Philippines at the low end among Southeast Asian countries with fresh water availability, Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said.

"The uncoordinated and uncontrolled exploitation of our country's water resources has had a major impact on the availability of clean and safe water at present, and has already jeopardized the supply of this resource for future generations," Reyes said.

The study noted that as early as now, water supply constraints could be felt in Metro Manila and eight key cities across the country—Cebu, Davao, Iloilo, Bacolod, Angeles City, Zamboanga, Baguio and Cagayan de Oro.

The DENR study showed that while there was increase in the country's overall water supply from 1990 to 2002, coverage actually declined from 81.4 percent to 80 percent in 2002 largely because of the increase in population during the period.

"The decline in coverage was more pronounced in the rural than in the urban areas," Reyes pointed out. "In Metro Manila and Cebu, signs of over-extraction of groundwater resulted in the lowering of the water table and a consequent increase in water salinity."

Ramon B. Alikpala, executive director of the National Water Resources Board, irrigation of agricultural lands was actually responsible for more than 70 percent of all water use.

"Because drainage flows from agriculture are polluted due to the use of pesticides and freshwater, less fresh water is available for drinking and industrial use," Alikpala said.

He added that pollution has also aggravated the crisis by reducing water usability, while over-extraction of groundwater has resulted in the lowering of the water table and an increase in salinity.

Reyes also noted that only 36 per-

DENR/ B2

Analysts see 5.4% growth this year

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY IS SEEN POSTING a higher growth rate of 5.4 percent this year and a lower inflation rate of 4.6 percent, based on the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' latest quarterly poll on private analysts.

For 2008, the consensus among 17 private institutions was for a further pick-up in gross domestic product (GDP) growth to 5.7 percent and a slight increase in the mean inflation forecast to 5 percent.

"The analysts that responded to the BSP survey noted that the current low interest rate environment, declining inflation and

ANALYSTS/ B2

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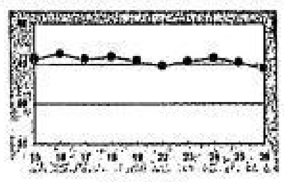

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Stocks seen consolidating

SMALLER CAPITALIZED FIRMS MAY STEAL the limelight this week as the broader stock market is expected to consolidate after a six-day run-up followed by last Friday's sharp 3.43-percent drop.

In a research note to its clients, AB Capital

STOCKS/ B4

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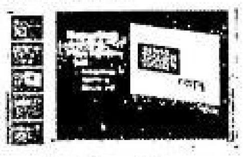


Windows Vista opens to exciting possibilities /B10

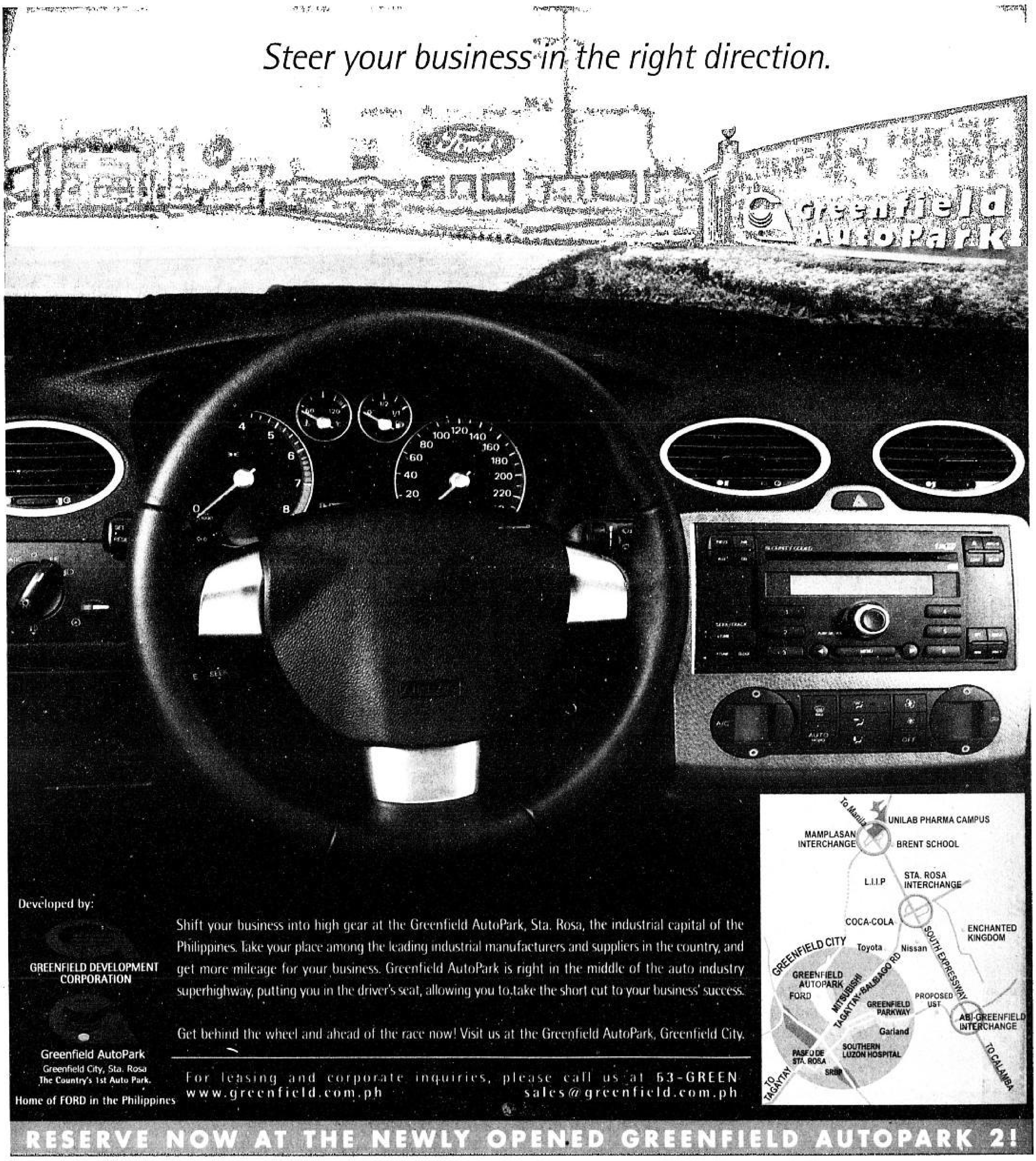
ADB: LGUs hinder, not help, RP dev't/B2

NO FREE LUNCH
External drivers /B2

FirstPac may pursue PLDT bid sans NTT /B4

Trade between RP, Taiwan up 4% at $6.81B /B2

IT projects boost ecozone investments /B5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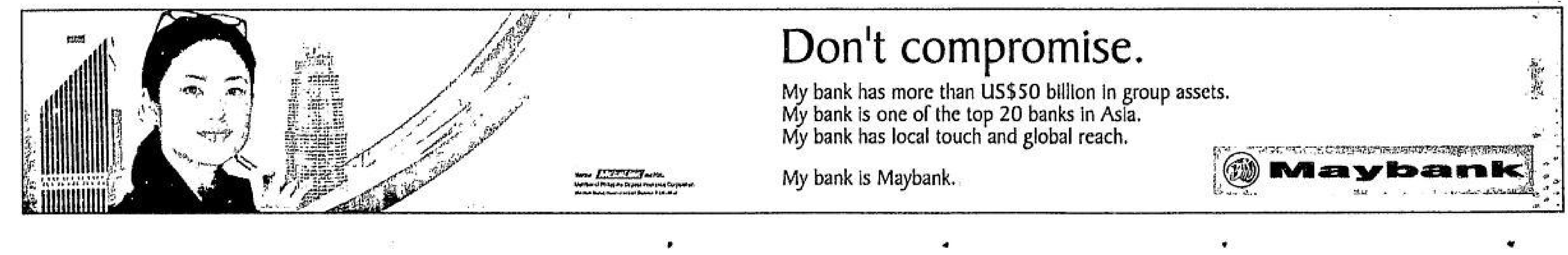
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ADB: LGUs not helping RP dev't

By Michelle V. Remo

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT Bank, one of the country's biggest sources of financial assistance, said that the local governments' lack of initiative to contribute to national development has been a drag on the country's growth prospects.

In a recently published book entitled, "Urbanization and Sustainability in Asia," the ADB said local government units (LGUs) in the Philippines have not delivered sufficiently in helping make the country competitive as opposed to its counterparts in Asia.

"Individual LGUs hardly contemplate competing in the global economy," the foreign funding agency said. "Most local development plans are supply-driven, inward-looking, and limited to encouraging businesses that cater to local consumption needs or, at best, attracting industries producing relatively low-value and small-scale products for exports."

While many LGUs in the country have a strong orientation in providing services to their constituents, the ADB said, they lack the orientation in developing local investments.

"The Special Economic Zone Act and the creation of hundreds of economic zones, for instance, have not helped in developing national/local industries that can compete in the world market," the ADB said. "Instead, the LGUs compete with each other to host foreign locators."

Their focus on attracting foreign investors, and lack of drive to promote industries of their own, have hindered LGUs from using their competitive advantages, the ADB said.

The bank observed that some LGUs rely heavily on the internal revenue allotment (IRA) coming from the national government to fund operations instead of generating their own funds.

The national government has fiscal problems of its own, and the Department of Finance has since been urging the LGUs to take the initiative in raising funds, rather than depend on the IRA.

Under the Local Government Code, 40 percent of the national government's revenue should be allocated to LGUs.

The ADB said LGUs have also been depending heavily on grants and donations. They have not even turned to the capital market to raise their own financing requirements.

Also, the LGUs lack the technical capability to carry out developmental projects, the ADB noted.

While the national government has undertaken several build-operate-transfer agreements with the private sector for vital infrastructure projects, the LGUs have not engaged in such a strategy to pursue its own development projects.

The ADB commented that the national government has not encouraged LGUs enough to maximize their growth potentials, citing the lack of coordination between the two.

External drivers

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

IN THIS AGE OF GLOBALIZATION, NO country, whether big or small, could fully determine its own economy's direction and performance. It is this recognition that pulls the movers and shakers of the world's economies to converge in the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, in January of every year. President Arroyo was there last week, both to sell the country and Asean, and to get a more first-hand feel of the pulse of the world economy as it enters another year of risks and uncertainties.

I had the privilege of joining President Ramos in that same talk-fest in the 1990s, and addressing a couple of workshops in our coordinated effort then to tell the world that "the Philippines is back in business." Judging from the feedback we got at the time, we seemed convincing enough to our audiences then. Certain political and governance liabilities that President Ramos didn't have then make that selling job more difficult for the current President and her economic team now. Still, for our country's sake, I wish them all the success in convincing key investors that our country is worth putting their stakes into, as our economic outlook for 2007 and beyond depends a lot on this.

Cheerleading

There appears to be a general sentiment going around that 2007 will be a better year for the Philippine economy, and that is good. Perceptions and expectations matter for the economy, as they could be self-fulfilling to a certain extent. Optimism breeds investments, and investments create jobs and incomes. That is why you cannot expect our economic managers to say publicly that 2007 will be a worse year for the economy. They have what former Neda chief Philip Medalla calls a "cheerleading" role.

Still, an objective analysis demands that we consider the key factors that bear on our economic performance in the near future. And the outlook for the world's economies is a prominent factor to consider for any such crystal ball-gazing exercise. As it stands, those tasked with projecting world economic trends are mostly expecting global economic growth to moderate somewhat in 2007, compared to the past year. The IMF World Economic Outlook expects an average global economic growth of 4.9 percent, slightly lower than the 5.1 percent projected for 2006.

Major partners

In the US, the trend being watched is the cooling housing market, which is expected to dampen private consumption expenditures and overall production. Economic growth is forecast to slow down to 2.9 percent, from the 3.4 percent projected for 2006. President Bush's decision to further escalate involvement in Iraq will raise the already high fiscal and current account deficits even higher, up towards 7 percent of GDP. This is about twice what is normally considered sustainable. It is for this reason that the US dollar is widely expected to continue weakening.

Japan's economic growth is likewise expected by the IMF to moderate from 2.7 percent last year, to about 2.1 this year. In Europe, increased taxes in Germany—the largest economy in the continent—are expected to trim growth down to 2 percent from last year's 2.4 percent. And China has been trying hard—albeit unsuccessfully so far—to slow down its GDP growth from a brisk 10-11 percent to a more manageable 8 percent.

Inasmuch as these are our biggest trade and investment partners, it is logical to expect that we would be "importing" that same moderation in growth of their respective economies, mainly through more moderate exports and foreign investments.

Major risks

Meanwhile, the WEF Global Risk Network reports that levels of risk are rising in 15 out of the 23 core risks watched by the network. Foremost among the economic risks are oil price shocks, the falling US dollar, a Chinese economic "hard landing," fiscal crises induced by aging populations in rich countries, and a "blow up" in asset prices—the last risk of which the network believes to be more acute now than it was a year ago.

The WEF network also sees a worsening in four out of five environmental risks, namely climate change, loss of freshwater services, tropical storms and inland flooding. Meanwhile, six geopolitical risks—namely, international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, wars, failed states, retrenchment from globalization and Middle East instability, are also worsening. The WEF warns that "if such factors tip into a degree of intractability, the environment for business and society could be changed beyond recognition."

Internal influences

If the external environment doesn't sound too encouraging, what about domestic influences? Improved government finances, slowing prices, and low interest rates are positive factors. But investors' usual wait-and-see stance prior to the elections leads me to write off any significant investment growth, at least in the first half of the year. The above discussions suggest that export growth may moderate this year.

Will consumer and government spending save the day? Perhaps. But it remains to be seen whether these could propel the economy enough to give us a truly better economy in 2007.

Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

11-month trade between RP, Taiwan rose 4% to $6.81B

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TRADE BETWEEN TAIWAN AND THE Philippines increased by 4 percent to about $6.81 billion in the 11 months to November as the two governments work out details related to a growth corridor that traverses the Luzon Strait.

Taiwan's Government Information Office (GIO) reported that the island economy brought in from the Philippines goods—including re-imports—worth $2.62 billion as of the end of November.

This represented an improvement of 1.9 percent in orders from Taiwan from about $2.58 billion in the same period of 2005.

At the same time, Taiwan sent to the Philippines goods—including re-exports—worth $4.18 billion or an increase of 5.39 percent against figures for the comparative year-ago period.

In the January-November trading, Taiwan maintained a trade surplus of about $1.55 billion, increasing by about 11.9 percent from $1.39 billion.

GIO data further showed that the Philippines remained as Taiwan's 13th biggest trading partner accounting for 1.74 percent of its total global trade for the period valued at $390.44 billion.

Among developing countries excluding mainland China, the country has become Taiwan's fifth-largest trade partner after Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Indonesia. China is Taiwan's biggest trading partner with a 17.9-percent of the latter's trade.

As of November, the Philippines was the 11th largest destination of Taiwanese exports with about 2.04 percent of total outbound cargoes valued at $204.4 billion.

As with the previous month, the country's ranking as a source of Taiwan's imports was 16th, accounting for about 1.41 percent of total inbound shipments worth some $186 billion.

Manila and Taipei signed in December 2005 a memorandum of agreement to establish a growth corridor that links the Kaohsiung freeport area in southwestern Taiwan to the Subic and Clark special economic zones in the northern Philippines.

Economic officials from both sides are fleshing out details of how the corridor would be realized, particularly through a yearly joint economic meeting, the last being held in December.

As a result of that meeting, Taiwan's Council of Labor Affairs agreed to allow 90-day visa for Filipino workers who want to undergo training there.

Sheng-bao Tseng, chief of Taiwan's Export Processing Zone Authority, said this gave a leeway for Filipinos who normally would have to secure an employment contract of up to two years before they could enter Taiwan.

Tseng added that a "more convenient" cross-border movement of labor was one of the main concerns of Taiwanese firms that were interested to engage in the Kaohsiung-Subic corridor.

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Analysts . . .

From page B1

appreciating peso should spur increased economic activity. The analysts also noted that private consumption will remain robust on expectation of sustained inflows of remittances," the BSP said in its fourth-quarter report on inflation.

"Election-related spending should likewise support domestic demand. However, they also noted that export growth could moderate due partly to the slowdown in the US economy," the report explained.

GDP refers to the total amount of goods and services produced by the economy in a given period while inflation measures the average rate of increases in the prices of basic consumer goods and services.

The mean forecast for real GDP growth for 2007 was a slight upgrade from the 5.4-percent consensus during the previous quarter's survey while the inflation forecast went down from the earlier projection of 5.3 percent.

The growth expectations were less optimistic than the government's average forecast of GDP growth of 6 percent for this year and 6.2 percent for 2008. But the consensus inflation forecasts were in line with the BSP's own expectations of a decelerating trend.

The government is targeting an inflation rate of between 4 and 5 percent this year. The BSP's own forecasts also indicate that average inflation in 2008 was likely to be in line with the 3-5 percent range.

"Analysts cited the strengthening currency and easing international oil prices as factors that could contribute to a further slowdown in inflation," the BSP report said.

"Private sector analysts also noted that the benign inflation outlook reflects sound monetary policy and increased competition in the region," the BSP said.

"However, analysts cited risks to future inflation, particularly the presence of excess liquidity and further strengthening in consumer demand against a backdrop of limited increases in output as investments remained subdued," it said.

The BSP said the continued benign inflation readings and an outlook of within-target inflation implied that authorities would have some room to maintain the current settings for monetary policy.

DENR . . .

From page B1

cent of the river systems can be classified as possible sources of public water supply and as many as 50 of the 421 rivers in the country can be considered "biologically dead."

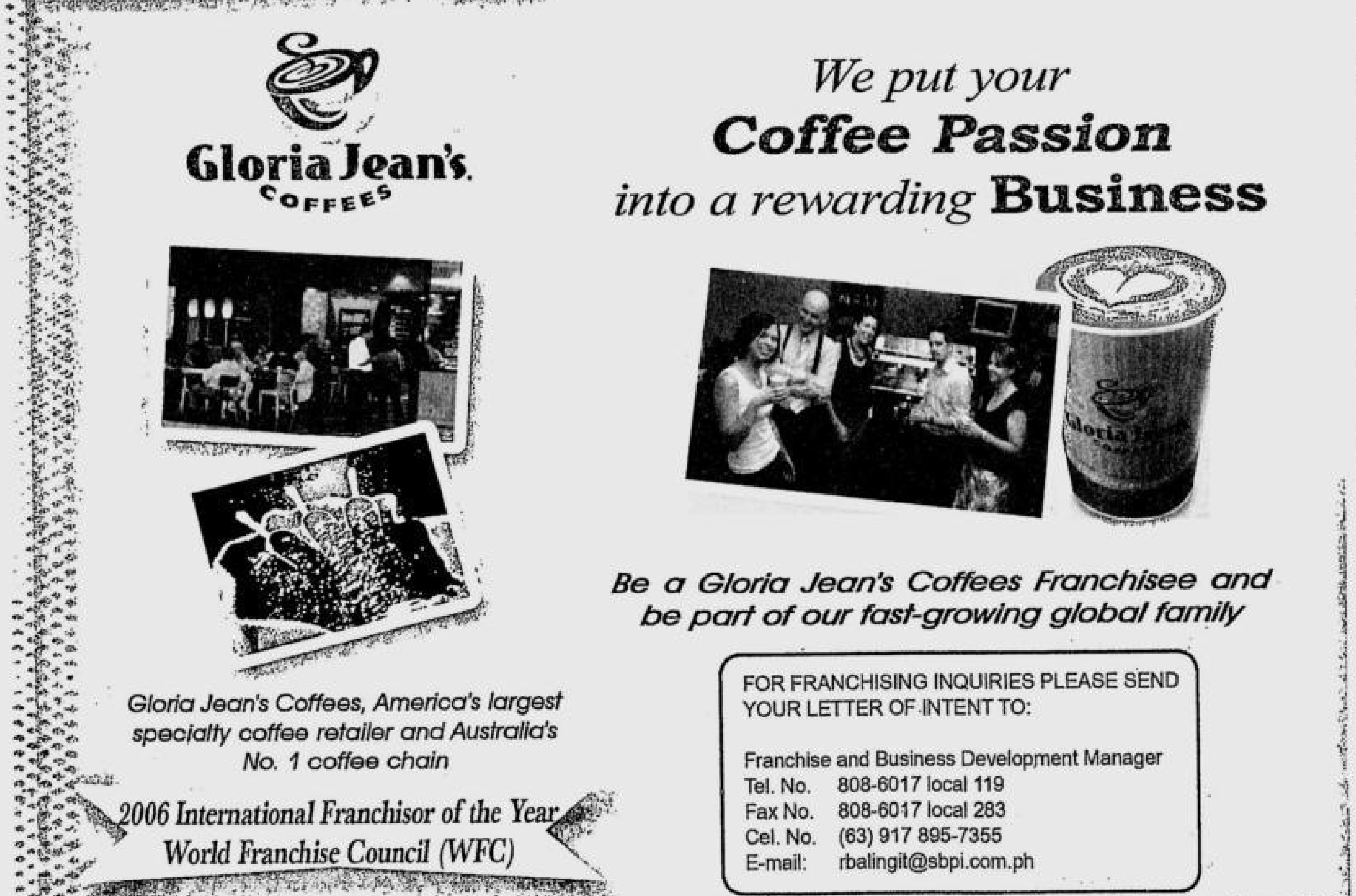
Reyes said that it has to be admitted that there were shortcomings in the current management of the country's water resources, citing the extra focus on developing new sources of water supply than on managing existing ones better.

"We have to admit that a top-down approach to water management has actually resulted in uncoordinated development and poor management of the resource," Reyes said

Reyes said the DENR has convened for the first time an Integrated Water Resource Management Group involving government agencies engaged in water resources conservation and management.

Aside from the DENR's attached agencies, other members of the IWRM Group are the Department of Agriculture's National Irrigation Administration, National Power Corp. and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System as lead agencies.

He said the collaboration of all sectors in the planning and management of water resources, involving users, planners and policymakers at all levels, was needed to prevent an acute crisis that could result in sectoral "conflicts" in the use of the water resources.



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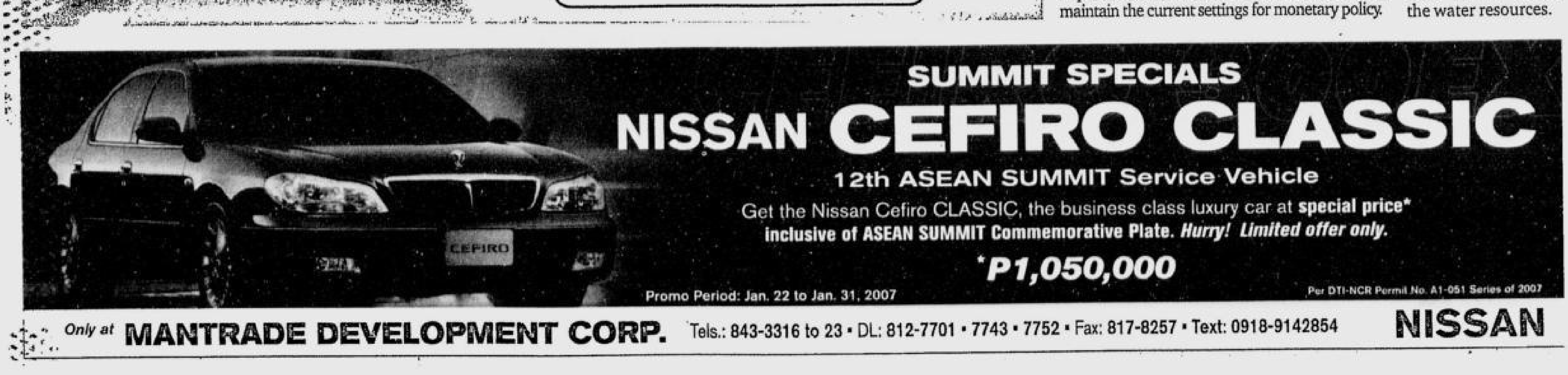

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NISSAN

DOF reveals downside of strengthening peso

By Michelle V. Remo

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION may consider the strengthening of the peso an indicator of macroeconomic development, but the appreciation of the currency had actually contributed to a revenue loss of as much as P18.1-billion last year.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that the Bureau of Customs, which collects duties from importers of goods, lost P18.1 billion in potential duty collection because of the higher value of the peso.

Imported goods are valued in dollars. An appreciation of the peso therefore makes imports cheaper in peso terms, and drags down the revenue collection of the BOC, the second-biggest revenue contributor to the national government, after the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The peso last year breached the 50-to-a-dollar mark, to hover in the 49 level and settle at record highs.

Another P6 billion in potential revenue was lost due to the lower-than-expected volume of oil imports, which was attributed to the increase in oil prices that somehow discouraged importation.

The BOC was estimated to have collected P198.1 billion in 2006. The amount could have been higher without the strengthening of the peso and increase in oil prices.

But Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales had said that, despite the adverse impact of a rising peso and higher oil prices, the BOC was still able to hit its official target for 2006.

The BOC was tasked to collect P197 billion for the government last year to help reduce the state's budget deficit from 146.8 billion in 2005 to only P125 billion in 2006.

Officials said higher-than-expected importation of other goods and implementation of measures to enhance the collection of duties compensated for the foregone revenue.

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PELAC Global Bond Fund	1.1800	1.1804
PELAC Peso Fixed Income Fund	1.0344	1.0351
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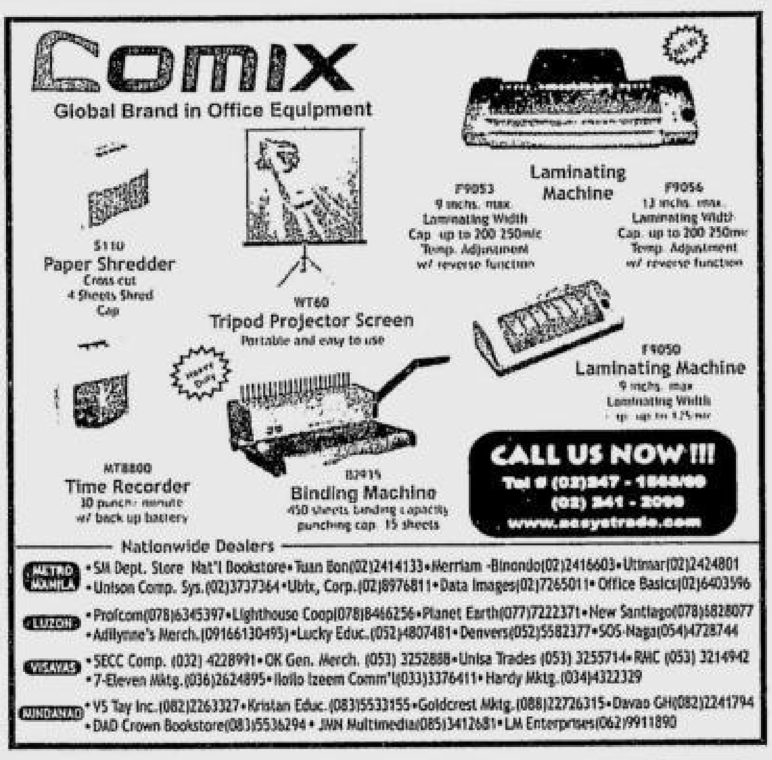
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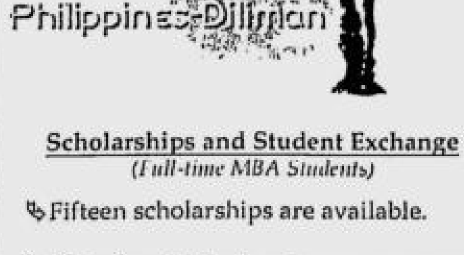
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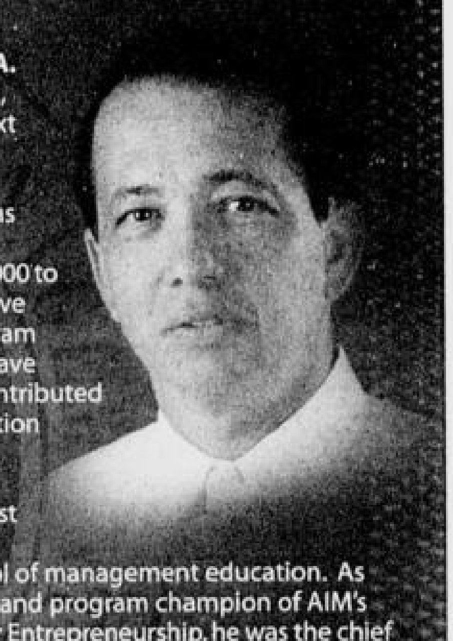
Prof. Morato was the Dean of the Institute from 2000 to 2002. His creative curricular program interventions have significantly contributed to AIM's reputation and ranking as Asia's and the Philippine's most innovative graduate school of management education. As conceptualizer and program champion of AIM's Asian Center for Entrepreneurship, he was the chief architect of the Master in Entrepreneurship Program. Prof. Morato is a highly intellectual and skilled guru, having patiently guided and mentored over a hundred entrepreneurs in the past years. His vast experience and involvement in the academe, public and private sectors forms the foundation of his teaching, research and business/community outreach initiatives. He has recently launched his latest book entitled "Strategic Planning and Management", a comprehensive planning and programming process designed for entrepreneurs, leader-strategists, corporate planners and strategy teachers and students at the college or graduate degree levels.



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Binmay Country Club	Please Call	540,000
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Calatagan Golf Club "B"	60,000	50,000
Camp John Hay	350,000	300,000
Canlubang	550,000	420,000
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,600,000	1,400,000
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	90,000
Club Filipino	100,000	90,000
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	90,000	-
Forest Hills "B"	150,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	-
Luisita Golf "A"	350,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	190,000	160,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	200,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	12,500,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,600,000
Manila Polo	2,800,000	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	300,000	-
Manila Southwoods "B"	750,000	650,000
Manila Yacht Club	250,000	-
Mimosa (Individual)	220,000	200,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	600,000	550,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	160,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	180,000	150,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	300,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "C"	370,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	150,000	125,000
Spa & Lodge	580,000	500,000
Sta. Elena "A"	-	1,300,000
Sta. Elena "B"	2,140,000	1,800,000
Summit Point "A"	280,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	320,000	290,000
Tagaytay Highlands	-	630,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	620,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	-
Valley Golf	200,000	180,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	-	7,000,000

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,100,000/1,300,000*	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	300,000/Pls. Call*/Pls Call**
Baguio Country Club	-	500,000
Camp John Hay	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Canlubang Golf	-	420,000
Canyon Woods	100,000	-
Capitol Hills	50,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	80,000
Club Filipino	90,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	170,000/280,000*/350,000**	Pls. Call*
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/Pls. Call*	120,000*
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	12,600,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,800,000
Manila Polo	2,750,000	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	300,000/Pls. Call*	-
Makati Sports Club A	200,000	-
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	280,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	160,000	-
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	Pls. Call/550,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	160,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call*/350,000**	150,000/300,000**
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	150,000	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	80,000/170,000*/250,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	100,000*
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	-	1,300,000
Subic Golf	190,000	-
Summit Point A	300,000	-
The Palms Country Club	350,000	330,000
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	320,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	650,000	620,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	620,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club A/B*	150,000/180,000*	-
Valley Golf	200,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	Pls. Call	-
Wack Wack Golf	Pls. Call	7,000,000

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STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Head Office and Branches)
As of December 29, 2006

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Items	P	7,620,181,889
Due from Bangko Sentral		39,453,813,061
Due from Other Banks		1,017,981,630
Interbank Loans Receivable		18,097,522,136
Trading Account Securities (Net)		40,007,751
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		106,133,027,011
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)		139,175,653,904
Underwriting Accounts (Net)		155,103,000
Equity Investments (Net)		3,136,285,104
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (Net)		4,677,772,865
Other Assets (Net):		
Property Owned/Acquired		11,959,895,061
Others		29,304,876,130
TOTAL ASSETS	P	360,772,119,532

LIABILITIES

Demand Deposits	P	95,725,116,543
Savings Deposits		152,596,602,548
Time Deposits		19,516,576,549
Special/Other Deposits		741,366,217
Due to Bangko Sentral		223,039,383
Due to Banks		10,061,854
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		1,327,374,716
Bills Payable:		
BSP-Rediscounting/Special Programs		443,496,422
Deposits Substitutes		237,058,512
Others		33,105,897,723
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		3,251,445,458
Other Liabilities		12,561,955,195
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (Inclusive of Unamortized Premium/Discount)		7,354,500,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	327,094,551,120

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

Capital Stock	P	11,971,000,000
Surplus		8,626,131,273
Surplus Reserves		3,059,552,221
Other Capital Accounts		10,020,884,918
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		33,677,568,412
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	360,772,119,532

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	P	2,683,940,010
Bills for Collection		115,529,346
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		12,024,607,500
Spot/Future Exchange Bought		(318,695,000)
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements		
Invested in:		
- Government Securities		22,451,856,219
- Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stocks		116,033,363
- Loans and Discounts		203,421,449
- Other Assets		13,219,977,600
Accountabilities:		
- Trust and Other Fiduciary		28,317,257,954
- Common Trust Funds		149,333,687
- Investment/Fund Management		7,524,696,990
Other Contingent Accounts		418,164,972
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	50,914,835,459

OTHER INFORMATION

1. Deposits of:		
a. Government	P	175,966,324,760
b. Banks		6,949,195,646
c. Trust Department		663,400,739
2. Compliance with Magna Carta Law:		
a. Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 6% (Small Enterprises)		23.83%
b. Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 2% (Medium Enterprises)		3.97%
3. Amount of Non-Performing Loans		10,021,392,180*
4. Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio		5.81 %
5. Amount of Classified Loans and Other Risk Assets		31,855,826,267
6. General Provision for Loan Losses		1,400,597,722
7. Specific Provision for Loan Losses		13,889,241,353
8. Return on Equity (ROE)		13.42%
9. Amount of DOSRI Loans/Advances		29,145,559,275
10. Ratio of DOSRI Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio		16.89%
11. Amount of Past Due DOSRI Loans/Advances		276,403,910
12. Ratio of Past Due DOSRI Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio		0.16%

*Includes Loans Classified as "Loss" which are fully covered by Allowance for Probable Losses amounting to P451,132,813.68

I/We, ANDRES C. SARMIENTO and GILDA E. PICO of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above Statement of Condition are true and correct to the best of my/our knowledge and belief.

Sgd. ANDRES C. SARMIENTO
SVP, Controllership Group

Sgd. GILDA E. PICO
President & CEO

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 24th day of January 2007 in Manila City, affiants exhibiting to me their Residence Certificate No. 01578477, issued in Manila City on January 5, 2007 and Residence Certificate No. 05135611 issued in Calamba, Laguna on January 3, 2007

Doc. No. 410
Page No. 83
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Series of 2007

EFREN O. BRILLANTE
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2007
PTR No. 4556193/1-3-07, Manila
Roll No. 36300, TIN No. 105-559-708

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Bank and Financial Subsidiaries)
As of December 29, 2006

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Items	P	7,627,631,009
Due from Bangko Sentral		39,453,813,061
Due from Other Banks		1,057,087,965
Interbank Loans Receivable		18,097,522,136
Trading Account Securities (Net)		40,007,751
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		106,185,929,337
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)		139,464,769,559
Underwriting Accounts (Net)		155,103,000
Equity Investments (Net)		2,159,600,185
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (Net)		4,755,550,254
Other Assets (Net):		
Property Owned/Acquired		11,972,673,610
Others		30,278,646,318
TOTAL ASSETS	P	361,248,334,185

LIABILITIES

Demand Deposits	P	95,703,889,176
Savings Deposits		152,560,854,819
Time Deposits		19,516,576,549
Special/Other Deposits		741,366,217
Due to Bangko Sentral		223,039,383
Due to Banks		10,061,854
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		1,327,374,716
Bills Payable:		
BSP-Rediscounting/Special Programs		443,496,422
Deposits Substitutes		237,058,512
Others		33,105,897,723
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		3,796,825,847
Other Liabilities		12,557,787,989
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (Inclusive of Unamortized Premium/Discount)		7,354,500,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	327,578,529,207

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

Capital Stock	P	11,971,000,000
Surplus		8,621,061,268
Surplus Reserves		3,059,946,042
Other Capital Accounts		10,017,797,668
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		33,669,804,978
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	361,248,334,185

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	P	2,683,940,010
Bills for Collection		115,529,346
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		12,024,607,500
Spot/Future Exchange Bought		(318,695,000)
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements		
Invested in:		
- Government Securities		22,451,856,219
- Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stocks		116,033,363
- Loans and Discounts		203,421,449
- Other Assets		13,219,977,600
Accountabilities:		
- Trust and Other Fiduciary		28,317,257,954
- Common Trust Funds		149,333,687
- Investment/Fund Management		7,524,696,990
Other Contingent Accounts		418,164,972
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	50,914,835,459

OTHER INFORMATION

1. Deposits of:	P	175,966,324,760
a. Government		6,949,195,646
b. Banks		683,400,739
c. Trust Department		

2. List of Bank's Financial Subsidiaries
- a. LBP Leasing Corporation
- b. LBP Financial Services, SPA
- c. LBP Remittance Co., USA

I/We, ANDRES C. SARMIENTO and GILDA E. PICO of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above Statement of Condition are true and correct to the best of my/our knowledge and belief.

Sgd. ANDRES C. SARMIENTO
SVP, Controllership Group

Sgd. GILDA E. PICO
President & CEO

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Until December 31, 2007
PTR No. 4556193/1-3-07, Manila
Roll No. 36300, TIN No. 105-559-708

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FirstPac may pursue PLDT bid sans NTT

By Riza T. Olchondra

HONG KONG-BASED FIRST PACIFIC CO. LTD. may acquire the government's 6.3-percent stake in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) on its own as talks with NTT DoCoMo drag on, First Pacific managing director Manuel V. Pangilinan said.

The 6.3-percent PLDT stake corresponds to the government's 46-percent interest in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC) which, in turn, controls a 13.8-percent stake in PLDT. The remaining 54 percent of PTIC is owned by Metro Pacific Asset Holdings and Larouge BV, both subsidiaries of First Pacific.

Pangilinan told the INQUIRER that talks with Japan-based mobile telecommunications company were still ongoing.

"(But) at this point, it may be more expedient to acquire 100 percent of the (111,415) shares. We can (do so)," he said.

Pangilinan earlier said First Pacific would match the P25.2-billion offer from Singaporean equity group Parallax Fund XXVII and that the Hong Kong company was "financially capable" to buy the entire indirect stake, possibly through a mix of equity and loans.

It was recently reported that a $300-million loan was being arranged to enable First Pacific to make the acquisition.

However, Pangilinan said it was more practical and strategic at the outset to jointly bid with NTT DoCoMo, which already has a 13-percent stake in PLDT.

Pangilinan did not venture on why NTT has not jumped at the chance to increase its 13-percent stake in the country's largest telecommunications company. However, reports indicated that the Japanese telco might have been turned off by controversies that erupted when the government offered the sequestered shares from PTIC at a 15-percent discount.

The discount was offered based on the assessment made by Development Bank of the Philippines, the finance department's consultant for the sale, that the PTIC shares were illiquid, non-listed and harder to trade, unlike direct PLDT shares.

"First Pacific has until the end of the month to exercise the right of first refusal," company spokesperson Sara Cheung told the INQUIRER last week.

Stocks . . .

From page B1

Securities said that attention would shift to "smaller cap issues with most blue chips prone to a correction and likely to remain flat after reaching all-time highs."

Last week, the Philippine Stock Exchange Index (PSEi) closed at 3,162.82, representing a 2.52-percent increase from 3,085.18 the previous week.

The rise was, however, overshadowed by the 113-point drop last Friday that was caused, in part, by the central bank's decision to leave its key interest rates unchanged.

Stock market watchers were expecting a rate cut that would have forced more investors to shift from fixed-income securities to the equity market.

AB Capital welcomed the central bank's decision on interest rates since it also provided the impetus for a "much needed correction."

"On a positive note, the correction was most welcome for us as it was attributed not to negative developments but merely to the Dow's 119-point drop last Wednesday," the broker said, pointing to the US stock market.

Average turnover last week rose to P4.17 billion a day—an average previously seen before the 1997 East Asian financial crisis—owing to the growing interest in the market as well as inflows from investors abroad.

AB Capital said "rotational buying" would make the market focus on issues that were neglected during the run-up of the previous trading sessions. *Daxim L. Lucas*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Jan. 26, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.4	7.4	7.1	7.1	25,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	49	49	47.5	48.5	1,539,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	70.5	70.5	68.5	69.5	914,300
China Banking Corp.	690	690	685	685	17,130
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.5	0.5	0.49	0.5	7,560,000
Equitable Pci Bank Inc.	85	85	85	85	44,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	59	59	57	57	5,745,900
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50	52	50	52	900
Philippine National Bank	48	48	47.5	48	34,700
Phil. Savings Bank	49.5	49.5	49	49.5	6,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	36.5	38	34.5	37.5	538,100
Security Bank Corp.	75	75	73	74	45,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	59	60	58	59	26,900
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	4.7	4.8	4.6	4.8	350,000
First Metro Invest. Corp	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	1,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1630	1630	1630	1630	380
Pci Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.56	1.6	1.56	1.6	22,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	370	377.5	370	377.5	3,800
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2040	2050	2040	2050	2,380
Ivantage Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.6	1.6	1,949,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
Pnoc Energy Dev. Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.75	4.8	35,213,000
First Gen Corp.	55	55	52.5	53.5	2,594,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp	73	73	71.5	71.5	1,046,500
Manila Electric Co. A	70	70	68	68.5	281,600
Manila Electric Co. B	70	70.5	68.5	69.5	2,033,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	8.9	9	8.9	9	1,813,000
Petron Corp.	4.15	4.2	4.1	4.2	14,012,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	406,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	100,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	13,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	43	43.5	43	43	97,200
Pancake House Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	5,000
Rfm Corp.	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.34	1,504,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	169,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	80,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	63.5	62.5	63	29,600
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	75	74.5	75	260,600
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.04	2.06	913,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	1,486,200
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.3	1.3	1.24	1.28	12,462,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.25	1,458,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	56,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.3	8.4	8.3	8.4	179,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.3	5.4	79,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.9	5	4.9	5	2,195,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	80,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.65	0.67	0.65	0.67	200,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.78	0.78	35,740,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.24	0.3	0.23	0.3	300,140,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	53,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	25,000,000
Ayala Corp.	625	625	600	610	93,700
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.8	8.8	8.7	8.7	8,090,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	9	9	9	9	3,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc	0.08	0.085	0.0775	0.085	122,400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.1	416,000
Apc Group Inc.	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.38	10,890,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	319,600,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.2	1.24	16,938,000
Atn Holdings Inc.	1.66	1.7	1.66	1.68	83,000
Atn Holdings Inc. B	1.86	1.86	1.8	1.8	9,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp	3.65	3.65	3.6	3.6	324,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	21,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.7	2.95	2.7	2.95	62,912,000
Dmci Holdings Inc.	7	7	6.7	6.9	3,043,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.8	4.85	4.75	4.85	3,695,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	190,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.7	2.75	2.5	2.75	791,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12.25	1,549,100
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	130,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	5.2	5.2	5	5.1	1,393,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.94	2	1.92	1.94	2,478,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	700,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	250,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	1,200,000
SM Investments Corp.	387.5	387.5	362.5	370	1,943,310
South China Resources Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	4,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.66	150,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	5,040,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16.75	16.75	16	16	12,466,000
Belle Corp.	1.2	1.22	1.18	1.22	6,688,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.86	1.94	1,096,000
Cityland Development Corp	1.7	1.76	1.64	1.76	12,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.46	5,170,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.4	3.45	3.35	3.45	2,315,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2	2	1.76	1.86	643,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.78	1.78	1.76	1.76	100,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.8	1.8	1.76	1.76	45,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	200,000
Eib Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	910,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.7	77,810,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	200,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.065	0.0675	0.065	0.0675	3,600,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.18	0.215	0.18	0.215	3,940,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.19	0.215	0.19	0.215	1,820,000
Interport Res.	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	10,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.008	0.009	0.008	0.009	3,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.3	1.4	42,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.51	0.51	0.49	0.5	3,400,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.79	0.8	4,680,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.027	0.027	0.024	0.024	6,700,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	4,200,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.5	2.55	2.46	2.46	90,879,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.8	4.85	4.8	4.8	145,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.31	0.32	5,250,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	720,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	16	16	15.25	15.75	3,195,600
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.68	0.68	0.65	0.65	37,260,000
SM Development Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.25	3.3	1,527,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.5	11.75	2,427,500
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.61	0.62	0.61	0.61	200,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	3,000,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	21.25	21.25	20.75	21	40,700
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.9	1.96	3,933,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1295	1295	1285	1290	163,500
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.6	1,619,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2720	2720	2630	2630	111,880
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	14,340,000
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	10,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.65	706,000
Ipvg Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.55	3.6	498,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	2,000,000
Ism Communications Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	1,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.34	2.36	2.28	2.28	817,000
Philweb Corp.	0.034	0.034	0.033	0.034	97,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.15	4.1	4.15	121,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	24.25	24.25	23.5	24	607,100
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.06	2.08	2.06	2.08	124,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	70,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	8,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.61	1,420,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	125,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	5,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	412,000
Paxys Inc.	23	23.25	22.75	23	260,200
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.1	5.4	5	5.4	1,051,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.1	5.4	5.1	5.4	423,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	237,600,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.9	8.9	8.8	8.8	562,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.2	9.4	9.1	9.4	76,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.55	2.55	2.5	2.5	53,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.28	0.26	0.26	4,510,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,780,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.026	858,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.03	0.03	0.029	0.029	543,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	58,900,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4	4	3.85	3.9	5,175,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	15	15.5	15	15.5	183,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.68	0.76	0.68	0.75	5,810,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.5	1.56	1.48	1.56	4,140,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	12,660,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	80,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	4,000,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	137,600,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	113,200

CURRENCIES

January 28, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.773096	1.000000	48.8850
Japan	Yen	0.006381	0.008254	0.4035
United Kingdom	Pound	1.518438	1.964100	96.0150
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099044	0.128113	6.2628
Switzerland	Franc	0.619369	0.801154	39.1644
Canada	Dollar	0.653505	0.845309	41.3229
Singapore	Dollar	0.502794	0.650364	31.7930
Australia	Dollar	0.601024	0.777424	38.0044
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.050599	2.652450	129.6650
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206115	0.266610	13.0332
Brunei	Dollar	0.501164	0.648256	31.6900
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.022672	0.029326	1.4336
Uae	Dirham	0.210504	0.272287	13.3107
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.293500	63.2327
Korea	Won	0.000826	0.001069	0.0523
China	Yuan**	0.099491	0.128692	6.2911
Argentina	Peso	0.249991	0.323363	15.8076
Brazil	Real	0.363468	0.470146	22.9831
Denmark	Kroner	0.134188	0.173572	8.4851
India	Rupee	0.017511	0.022650	1.1072
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220884	0.285714	13.9671
Mexico	New Peso	0.069957	0.090490	4.4236
New Zealand	Dollar	0.541081	0.699888	34.2140
South Africa	Rand	0.107114	0.138552	6.7731
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023540	0.030449	1.4885

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Jan. 25, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of Jan. 25, 2007

IT projects boost ecozone investments

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION technology-related projects continue to boost investment inflows as the Philippine Economic Zone Authority reported that since the start of the year, it has approved tax perks for 23 projects worth P2.36 billion.

Data from Peza show that the approved projects included P457.8 million worth of information technology-related ventures. These include five projects that are expected to create 2,021 new jobs when fully operational.

In total, the 23 projects are expected to create 2,970 new jobs and earn about $65.94 million a year in export sales.

Of the total amount, some P2.32 billion was in the form of locator investments while P42 million represented developers' projects.

Peza declined to disclose the details about the project proponents due to requests of investors, but said that one of the two IT projects was a P327.8-million venture engaged in inbound and outbound call center services for American clients. This is expected to create 1,240 new jobs and earn $19.1 million a year.

A similar project is worth P100 million and would provide services for clients from the United States, Europe and Southeast Asia. Seen to generate 533 new jobs, this project is expected to post an average of $12.1 million in yearly sales.

Another IT-related project involves the construction and development of a P672-million four-story building for projects related to electronic data processing and management information systems or services.

There are also two proposed 15-story buildings. One is worth P395.3 million and would have a floor area of 39,764 square meters to be located on a 3,411-sq.m. lot. The other is worth P196 million and would have a floor area of 15,097 sq.m. to be located on a 2,953-sq.m. lot.

Another big project—a new project by an export enterprises that is already listed with Peza—is the P348.56-million venture involving the assembly of module and i-button products.

The output would be for export to the United States, Europe and Japan. Once fully operational, 500 jobs would be created and exports revenues were expected to reach $3 million a year.

Last week, the Business Process Association of the Philippines said industry revenues were estimated to have reached a total of $3.63 billion in 2006 or 50 percent more than the $2.42 billion posted in 2005.

Considered the country's sunshine industry, the BPO sector is pushing for higher-end projects toward a target of creating a million jobs and posting $12 billion in revenues by 2010.

BSP set to keep tiering scheme

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas said the tiering system it had put in place last November would remain until banks could show substantial progress in their lending activities.

"The objective of the tiering system was to increase bank lending. If we (BSP) see that lending has already gained momentum, that would be the time we are going to do a review (for possible lifting)," Diwa Guinigundo, deputy governor of the BSP, said in a press briefing Friday.

Under this scheme, the BSP pays lower interest rates on deposits in excess of P5 billion. A bank's first P5 billion worth of deposits with the BSP will get the headline interest rate of 7.5 percent but the amount in excess of P5 billion will yield an interest of only 5.5 percent. Deposits in excess of P10 billion will get lower interest rate of 3.5 percent.

The BSP has kept the headline policy rate of 7.5 percent, but Guinigundo said the tiering scheme was tantamount to the key policy rate by over 200 basis points.

Guinigundo said that with the lower interest rate on deposits in excess of threshold levels, banks would be encouraged to place more of their funds in other investment activities, including lending.

He said lending should be the primary function of banks, which play a crucial role in promoting economic development. Higher lending is necessary to help businesses implement expansion plans and finance investment activities.

The BSP earlier reported that loans extended by commercial banks grew by 6.8 percent to P1.682 trillion in November last year from year-ago level.

Guinigundo did not say what level of lending growth would prompt the the BSP to remove the tiering system but Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, a member of the Monetary Board, had said bank lending should post a double-digit growth of as much as 15 percent. He said a 10- to 15-percent growth in bank lending was needed to help recent macroeconomic gains trickle down to the masses.

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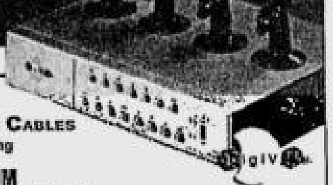

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BIR REQUIRES TAX-BASED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The BIR, pursuant to the Ruling issued by Hon. James Roldan, Assistant Commissioner, Legal Service requires taxpayers to prepare their financial statements using the 1997 Tax Code, as amended.

In violating it, Revenue Memorandum Order No. 1-90, as amended, imposes a maximum penalty of 25,000 aside from possible criminal prosecution that ranges from one (1) to six (6) year imprisonment. However, the payment of penalty does not relieve taxpayers to submit tax-based financial statements.

The last day for the submission of such, as attachments to 2006 income tax returns, is on April 16, 2007.

In related development, the Deputy Commissioner for Legal and Enforcement Group, Hon. GREGORIO V. CABANTAC, issued a October 30, 2006 Memorandum to all concerned in the BIR to effect, without delay and favor, the implementation of Tax Agent's Rules and Regulations. This means that the tax-based financial statements should only be audited and certified by BIR-accredited Tax Agents. Tax-based financial statements come from an accountant that uses the 1997 Tax Code in keeping his books of accounts or the so-called 'tax bookkeeping'.

Are you sure that the entries in your books of accounts are based on the 1997 Tax Code? To verify and confirm, please attend (Hotel Holiday Inn, Robinson's Galleria) the tax bookkeeping workshop-seminars on Feb. 7- EWT and compliance; Feb 8- Expenses and Allowable Deductions; Feb 22- Output Tax in relation to Sales for income and Local Taxes; Feb 23-Input tax and its documentation; Feb. 27, 28 & March 1-Common Errors in Handling BIR Letter of Authority, Subpoena Duces Tecum. No date yet: Preparation of Tax Based Financial Statements including Notes to Income Tax Returns.

Coach-Lecturer: Mr. Emelino T. Maestro, CPA, Tax Agent, Founding Chairman, Auditor Ng Bayan (N.GO) and Tax Accountant Society and Author of several tax books.

'First pay, Reserved seat' basis pls. visit 30 Plaridel, Dona Aurora, Quezon City or call 7420382, 4149336, 4131793, 0922-8620922 and 0922-8630922 look for Lenlen or Sonia.

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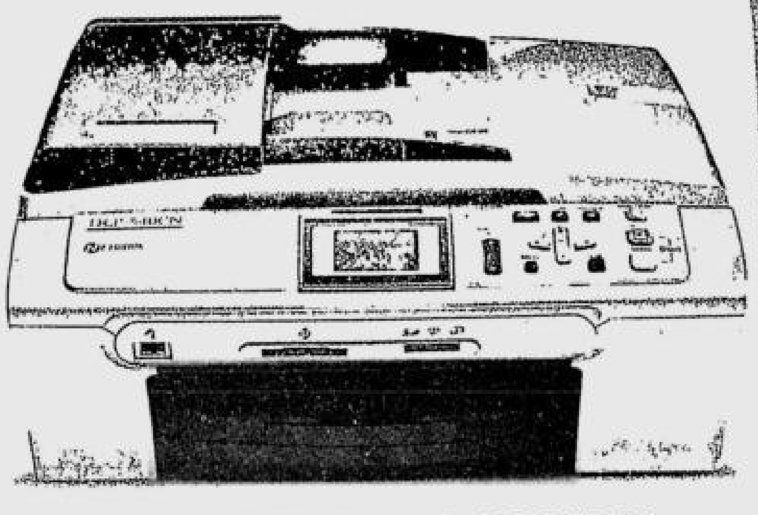

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BPI's new corporate theme takes you farther

THE BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS (BPI) has always carried on A Tradition of Leadership. Ever since most people can remember, this has been the institutional tagline of BPI. These capture a defining characteristic of the bank – the passion to always lead the way when it comes to matters most important to its customers and its publics. It is a passion that has lived on for 155 years, clearly manifest in the last few decades when BPI pioneered the electronic banking revolution, as it did in the 19th century when the bank issued the first paper money.

BPI's strength is clearly built on this heritage of innovation. It is the basis for BPI's image of trust, security, prestige and banking excellence. It is also the springboard for BPI's desire to further its role in continuing to be relevant to Filipinos abroad.

BPI offers visionary products and services for people to achieve their ambition of a better life. BPI has the know-how, the technology, and more importantly, the people who can make a difference in the lives of its clients. With these, BPI conveys its message with a bold new institutional tagline: "BPI. We'll take you farther."

This new campaign invites people to act now and partner with BPI. It is a message for existing customers, whose evolving needs are the reason for the Bank's zeal in improving its products and services. With most of its customers still having a single product relationship with the Bank, BPI knows that it still has a lot more to offer to them.

It is also directed to prospective clients, Filipinos here and abroad. It is an invitation to realize their dreams and aspirations by starting a relationship with BPI. In turn, BPI promises to take its partners "farther". The meaning of "farther" is determined by the customer himself. As always, BPI seeks to understand and anticipate consumers' needs, which in turn are the driver of the Bank's innovative products and services.

"We'll take you farther" can even refer not only to its customers, but to Philippine society in general. In the early years, El Banco Espanol Filipino was a prime mover of nation-building and it is no different today. By championing progressive money values, BPI provides the ingredients for strengthening the Philippine economy. And with programs such as Micro-Finance and the endeavors of BPI Foundation, BPI concretizes socio-economic development down to the grassroots of society.

Finally, "We'll take you farther" talks to the BPI employees. It is the recognition that the employees, collectively, are the Bank of the Philippine Islands. It is an assurance that BPI will likewise take its employees farther, in their careers, in their well-being and in their goals in life.

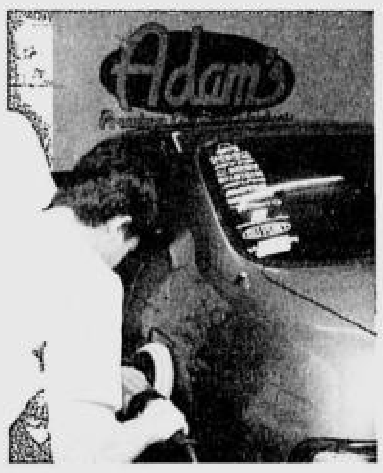
BPI, the bank with a tradition of leadership, will take you – its customers, its employee, its countrymen – farther.

TRI-WORLD PIANO CENTRE'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

th Annual Students' Recital

Beautiful music and sweet voices filled the air of SM Megamall during the Holiday season as the Tri-World Piano Centre presented its 4th Christmas Music Festival Dec. 10, 2006. at the SM Megamall Atrium Building A. The event showcased the talents of 77 participating students of Tri-World Piano Centre, highlighted by a performance of a wonder girl, 7-year-old Mikaela Pecson. Tri-World Piano Centre has been producing great musical talents for the past six years, and offers the following lessons: piano, guitar, voice, violin and other musical instruments. Tri-World Piano Centre acknowledges SM Megamall officials led by Royeto Cabunag, Lisa Silerio and Mabie Buraga for their assistance in the Christmas Music Festival. Shown is the string quartet (1st row) of 5-year-old Cocoy Justiniano, Katrina Ashley Panganiban, Nathaniel Ortiz, Sofia Salcedo (2nd row), Ericka Santiago, Julian Santiago, and Julius Santiago.

Extreme protection from Adam's



WHAT BETTER WAY IS THERE TO PROTECT your investment from the elements than having it waxed and coated by one of America's oldest and most trusted brands in car care. What started out as a backyard industry several decades ago has evolved into being the preferred choice of American auto detailers, car collectors, car clubs and Hollywood celebrities. Adam's Premium Car Care is the ultimate choice when it comes to auto detailing.

Adam's experience and extensive research and development have enabled it to provide the efficiency of achieving the deepest and richest shine possible. The scientifically mixed polish and waxes are easy to apply and remove; and is guaranteed not to leave a chalky white mark on your car's plastic and rubber trims. Each Adam's product is carefully formulated with special blends of high quality polymers, acrylics and waxes.

"The most important thing is that Adam's can out gloss anything on the market," says Manolet Santos of Ansan International Ventures Inc, the official distributor of Adam's car care products in the Philippines.

Adam's Premium Car Care signature line includes dressings, cleaners, sealants and polishes that are all guaranteed to outlast and outshine any product that you have used down the years. For information on how to take care of that investment, Adam's Car Care is available in all Do-It-Yourself (DIY) shops or call 894-2920 for details or e-mail Adam's at ansan@pldtdsl.net for further information.

Specific CRDi: Specific oil for true performance

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MORE CRDI CAR OWNERS ARE NOW EXPERRIENCING the true performance and power of their engines after switching to Motul Specific CRDi Diesel Oil.

Motul Specific CRDi Diesel is oil specifically formulated for powerful diesel engines fitted with Common Rail Direct Injection. Being a breakthrough and considered an advancement in the automotive industry, diesel engines with CRDi systems gives better emissions amidst the great performance it delivers. Known also for its fuel efficiency and driving comfort it provides, car manufacturers in the country have presented their Diesel Common Rail engines through different identities to name a few: Audi - TDi; BMW - Di Diesel; Chrysler - CDI/CRD; Ford - TDCi; Hyundai - CRDi; Isuzu - Di; Kia - CRDi; Mercedez Benz - CDI; Mitsubishi - Ddi; SsangYong - Xdi; Toyota - D4D.

To realize the benefits and performance of CRDi, Motul-- being true to its pioneering spirit, formulated the Specific CDRi Diesel oil. The high-pressure fuel being distributed in the injectors then to the cylinders, which result to precise and better combustion, creates higher temperature that magnifies the chances of deposits and sludge around the piston ring zone and high rate of oxidation that causes the oil to breakdown.

In maintaining and maximizing the performance of an engine, selecting the right oil for a specific application is necessary. This is where Motul Specific CRDi Diesel Oil comes in-it is designed to address and control the high temperature an engine with CRDi creates. Its reinforced synthetic base stock provides very high lubricating power that reduces friction and ensures protection against bore polishing, plus piston and piston grooves cleanliness. This Technosynthese engine oil also provides an outstanding detergent/dispersant performance to deal with additional soot/deposits coming from the environment and inside the engine, hence improving oil lifetime with better resistance to viscosity increase.

As the Motul van has experienced, "it lets the engine perform its best -- fuel savings improved, noise at high speed is gone, and driveability is always at peak, which also improved our delivery time in servicing dealers". With these encouraging results, Specific LL-01 (for BMWs) and Specific MB 229.5 were made available for people to use on their sophisticated cars. For information on how to experience true performance, visit Autoplus Sportzentrium at 233 Edsa, Mandaluyong (southbound) or call 726-3066/726-0399 or e-mail info@autoplus.com.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE for PICC PROJECTS

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors with current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for eligibility and to bid and if later found eligible to bid for the project described below:

Project Title	Proposed Design, Construction and One Year Operation of the PICC Sewage Treatment Plant
Scope of Work	Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision, laboratory testing and other services and performing all operations necessary for the proposed design, construction and one year operation of the PICC Sewage Treatment Plant all in accordance with the Terms of Reference and the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract
Project Location	PICC Complex, Pasay City
Approved Budget	Twenty Four Million Pesos (P24.000,000.00)
Source of Funding	BSP Corporate Funds
Contract Duration	Two Hundred Seventy (270) calendar days
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)	
PCAB License	Registration Particulars of at least "Medium A" (Building and Industrial Plant and/or Sewerage and Sewage Treatment / Disposal Plant)
Contractor's Construction Experience	Should have completed within the last five (5) years (2002 to present) at least three (3) projects involving design and construction of an STP facility utilizing the Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR) Technology one of which costs not less than twelve million pesos (P12,000,000.00)
	In case of a joint venture, submission of a valid joint venture agreement including the special PCAB license is required. The joint venture must have previously completed at least two (2) similar construction projects involving similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project
Certification of Satisfactory Performance	Should be able to submit certificates of satisfactory performance from the client of the declared completed similar projects.
	For those contractors who have previously done/completed BSP project/s, the certificate/s of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank for said project/s must be submitted.
Net Financial Contracting Capacity	At least Twenty Four Million Pesos (P24,000,000.00) *computed as 10 x (current asset less current liabilities) minus (value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started)*
Or	
Credit Line or Cash Deposit Certificate	At least Two Million Four Hundred Thousand Pesos (P2,400,000.00)
Letter of Intent (LOI)	
Deadline of Submission	February 16, 2007 / 9:30 AM
Eligibility Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	Five Hundred Pesos per set (P500.00/set)
Date of Issuance	January 29 to February 12, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Deadline of Submission	February 16, 2007 / 9:30 AM
Notice of Eligibility/Ineligibility	
Date of Issuance	February 26, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Bid / Tender Documents Issuance	Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Twelve Thousand Pesos (P12,000.00)
Date of Issuance	February 27 to 28, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Pre-Bid Conference	
Date and Time	March 05, 2007/ 10:00 AM
Venue	PDMO Conference Room 2nd Floor, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline of Submission	March 26, 2007 / 2:00 PM

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - Telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor – Five Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor P. Ocampo St., Manila.

The schedule of bid activities from the issuance of notice of eligibility/ineligibility up to the deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall govern relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – Jan. 29 & Feb. 12, 2007)

Office of the President
BCDA
Bases Conversion and Development Authority

26 January 2007

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(RE-BIDDING OF SECURITY SERVICES FOR AOR I & III)

1. The BASES CONVERSION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (hereinafter BCDA), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), wishes to invite all proponents with at least five (5) years in continuous business operation as a legitimate security agency to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Contract for Security Services for the Two (2) Areas of Responsibility (AORs) with their respective Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for one year, to wit:

AOR	AREA COVERED	NO. OF GUARD	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT
AOR I	a. BCDA Corporate Center	31	PhP 15,552,000.00
	b. Pamayanang Diego Silang	41	
AOR III	Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Project	73	PhP 12,618,780.00

2. All Bidders may bid for one or more AORs but shall be awarded only one contract or AOR. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall automatically be rejected at the bid opening.
3. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in the Instructions to Bidders (ITB) of the bidding document.
4. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of RA 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act" and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened, the process of which is described in the Instructions to Bidders. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
5. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from BCDA and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below on **30 January 2007 – 05 February 2007; 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**
6. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address given below on **30 January 2007 – 05 February 2007 not later than 4:00 p.m.** upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of **Five Thousand Pesos only (Php5,000.00)**. The method of payment will be in the form of Cash, Cashier's Check or Manager's Check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his duly authorized representative.
7. BCDA will hold a pre-bid conference open to all interested parties on **07 February 2007 at 9:00 a.m.** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2nd Floor, Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City.
8. Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted to the address mentioned below on or before **19 February 2007, 9:00 a.m.** All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of cash, surety bond from GSIS, Cashier's Check or Manager's Check in the amount equivalent to the following:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of the ABC for the Contract to be Bid
Cash, Cashiers Check, Manager's Check	One Percent (1%)
GSIS Surety Bond	Two and a Half Percent (2-1/2%)

In case the proposed bidder opts to accompany his/her bid with security in cash, he/she should pay directly to the BCDA Treasury and Investments Department and place the Official Receipt inside the big envelope which contain all the other bid envelopes. Late bids shall be received only for purposes of marking and recording the time at the BCDA Reception Area but shall not be accepted by the BAC for Goods. The bid security shall be valid for a period of 120 days from the date of the opening of bids (Sec.28, R.A. 9184)

9. Prospective bidders must submit their bids on **19 February 2007 not later than 9:00 a.m.** at the BCDA Reception Desk located at the 2nd Floor, Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. The reference time or clock that will be followed shall be the computer time at the BCDA Reception Area. Bids will be opened and evaluated accordingly. The Bidder's representatives may or may not opt to be present during the opening of the bids.
10. Bidders shall submit the following requirements in order to secure the complete set of the bidding documents.
    - Letter of Intent (LOI) to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid addressed to the Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and submitted to:

      BAC for Goods Secretariat:
      Ms. Fidela A. Ladores or
      Ms. Diana B. Barrera
    - Valid Certificate of Registration with Phil-GEPS.
11. BCDA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.
12. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Lally A. Ladores or Ms. Diana B. Barrera at telephone no. 816-6666 loc. 170/109.

For the BAC for Goods:

(Sgd.) NIEVELENA V. ROSETE
Chairperson

(PDI–Jan. 29, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
East Service Rd., South Superhighway, Taguig City

52nd TESDA Board Meeting
26 October 2006, Thursday, 1:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
South Superhighway, Taguig City

Resolution No. 2006 – 24

APPROVING THE AMENDMENTS ON THE TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION NCII

WHEREAS, Board Resolution No. 2004-02 Approving and Adopting the Training Regulations for the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Sector-Medical Transcription was promulgated by the TESDA Board during 41st TESDA Board Meeting which was held at 5 February 2004;

WHEREAS, the Education Committee of the Medical Transcription Industry Association of the Philippines, Inc. (MTIAPI) / Technical Experts have endorsed the amendments on the Training Regulations for Medical Transcription NCII (**Training Standards** with respect to trainee entry requirements, list of tools, equipments and materials, training facilities; trainers qualification and institutional assessment and **Acknowledgement**);

WHEREAS, during 17th Standard Setting and Systems Development TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting, 26 September 2006 the amendments to the Training Regulations for Medical Transcription NCII (Training Standards and Acknowledgement) were deliberated and favorably recommended to the TESDA Board for approval;

WHEREAS, during the 46th Executive Committee-TESDA Board Meeting held on 19 October 2006, the results of the deliberation on the amendments of the Training Regulations for Medical Transcription NCII was presented and favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the TESDA Board;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves the aforementioned amendments to the training regulations;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of the Resolution and Amended copies of the Training Regulations for Medical Transcription NCII be published and disseminated to all concerned and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All programs under these amended training regulations must comply with the requirements of the aforementioned TRs Graduates of TVET courses covered by the aforementioned training regulations shall be required to undergo mandatory assessment under the national assessment and certification system.

Adopted this 26th day of October 2006.

(Sgd.) **MA. ADORINDA DEJESUS-FORRO**
Board Secretary VI

(Sgd.) **DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary/Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(PDI–Jan. 28 & 29, 2007)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Merrit Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO, Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No.: 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to bid for the project:

**Supply, Fabrication and Delivery of Two (2) Units Semi-Ellipsoidal Head
and Upper Vessel Shell (SP-140 and Spare Unit) for the
Tongonan-I Production Field and One (1) Semi-Ellipsoidal Head
(SV-609) for South Sambaloran Separator Station
EDC 06-158-1**

The Budget for the Contract is PhP 5,714,210.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is **ninety (90) calendar days**.

Application forms for Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o M.A. Garduce) starting **January 29, 2007** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: One Thousand (PhP 1,000.00).

For purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **February 8, 2007, 10:00 a.m.** at 1st Floor Building 5, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

Applications for Eligibility and Sealed Bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor, Building 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m.** on **February 21, 2007** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI–January 29, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE
East Avenue, Quezon City
E-mail Address: ltombox@lto.gov.ph • Website: www.lto.gov.ph

INVITATION TO BID

The Land Transportation Office (LTO) invites all interested bidders for the disposal of LTO waste materials (surrendered plates from LTO-C.O., surrendered plates from LTFRB-C.O. & NCR) on an AS IS WHERE IS BASIS.

Bid form and other requirements may be secured from the Chairman, Disposal Committee upon submission of a letter of intent not later than **February 9, 2007.**

Submission of bids shall be on **February 15, 2007 at 2:00 P.M.**, Bids shall be opened immediately thereafter at the LTO-Property Section East Avenue, Quezon City.

Letter of intent and bid tender should be properly addressed as specified hereunder.

**The Chairman
LTO Disposal Committee
Property Section
East Avenue, Quezon City**

All bid tenders must be accompanied by a bid bond in the form of cash, equivalent to at least ten percent (10%) of the total bid offer.

The LTO reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formality in the Bids received or to accept such offer that the LTO may consider the most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) ENGR. ROBERTO S. SE
Chairman
LTO Disposal Committee

(PDI – January 29, 2007)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

ALLAN MALLARI DE LEON
Criminal Case
No. Q-06-139326

RODOLFO DAYUNDON JR.
Criminal Case
No. 22592

ANA LYDIA TERRANO GADIAN
Criminal Case
No. C-129-06-2001

QUALIFIED THEFT

Please be informed that a warrant of arrest has been issued against these persons

For any informations on their whereabouts, please call

897-7806 / 896-8325 / 897-7803

A reward shall be given to anyone who can provide valuable information leading to their arrest.

**REWARD MONEY
Php 50,000 each**

(PDI – Jan. 15, 21 & 29, 2007)

CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES
CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City
Wishes to announce its

INVITATION TO BID

"AS IS, WHERE IS"
For the sale of the following:

DESCRIPTION:

1	lot	Unserviceable office equipment, furniture & fixtures
1	lot	Kitchen equipment/utensils
1	lot	Unserviceable fire extinguishers
1	lot	Unserviceable theater equipment, video/audio equip.
1	lot	Mechanical equipment (turbo pack aircon chiller, Air cooled chiller & electric motors
1	lot	Musical instruments

Sealed bids in the prescribed form shall be received until 5:00 PM on February 07, 2007 at Property and Supply Division, Finance and Administrative Building, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City and shall then and there be opened for the sale of the item/s bidded.

All bids must be submitted with the proposal bond deposit in the form of cash or manager's check equivalent to 10% percent of the total bid price.

The said items are available for inspection during office hour from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on February 02-05, 2007 at the CCP Bodega.

Additional information, request for inspection and bid forms may be secured from **STEVE NILO** and **RAMIL AUSTRIA** at the above address or call telephone numbers 551-00-39 and 832-36-66.

The CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES reserves the right to reject any or all bids, as well as to waive any defect in such bids, and to accept such bids as may be advantageous of the Center.

(Sgd.) TERESA S. RANCES
Chairman, Committee on Disposal

(PDI--Jan. 27, 28 & 29, 2007)

TOP QUALITY USED CARS FROM JAPAN

10th Anniversary Sale!
from January 3, to February 1, 2007

Plus Gift Certificate to our Bayaning OFW, Balikbayan & Seaman

- *MAZDA Friendee ₱260*
- *SERENA "New Type" ₱260*
- *SPACE GEAR ₱299*

and many more...
Totoong Sale 'to!!
Fully Finish Units
dito kana walang sakit ng ulo!
FRESH IMPORT & W/ WARRANTY
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MANILA GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, INC.
HARVARD ROAD, FORBES PARK
MAKATI CITY

January 29, 2007

NOTICE OF AUCTION SALE

TO ALL MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC:

The Bidding Committee of Manila Golf and Country Club, Inc., hereby announces the auction sale of the following described property:

(a) one (1) individual proprietary membership certificate.
(b) one (1) corporate proprietary membership certificate.

Any interested party may submit his written bid beginning today until 4:00 p.m., February 7, 2007 to the Office of the Club's General Manager.

The bid shall be subject to the following conditions:

(c) Minimum bid of P13,500,000.00 for individual proprietary membership certificate.
(d) Minimum bid of P14,500,000.00 for corporate proprietary membership certificate.
(e) Bids shall be accompanied by manager's check equivalent to 20% of the bid price payable to the Manila Golf and Country Club, Inc. and the balance within three (3) days from notice of bid acceptance.
(f) Exemption from the transfer fee of P300,000.00
(g) Certificate will be issued immediately upon receipt of full payment and documentary stamp taxes.

CESAR CRUZ
Chairman, Bidding Committee

(PDI—Jan. 29, 2007)

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All Free of Charge

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT

PATRICK C. JAVILLO
4856 C. Int. 3
Old Sta. Mesa, Manila

JOSEPHINE B. ARBOLEDA
2312 Concha St.
Sta. Ana II, Manila

whose pictures and last known addresses appear above are no longer authorized to transact business on behalf of **CZARINA ARTS ENTERPRISES, INC.**, an affiliate of **Adpulse Trading Specialist, Inc.** and **Blumen Concepts, Inc.**, effective **JANUARY 1, 2007**.

Any transaction made by any of these persons on behalf of **CZARINA ARTS ENTERPRISES, INC.** shall not be honored by the company.

(PDI–Jan. 29, 2007)

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2nd Engr	from US$3,795.-	8 mos. Contract
3rd Engr	from US$2,640.-	10 mos. Contract
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e-mail: recruitment@crewserve.com.ph

Galant Maritime Services, Inc.
1101 Ermita Center Building
1350 Roxas Boulevard,
Ermita, Manila
PIC: C/M Norman Miranda
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AUTO MECHANIC – Male below 30 yrs. of age; Automotive Course graduate, skilled both in diesel/gasoline engines and in trouble-shooting.

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OBITUARIES

NESTOR BORJA TIANGCO

*Peacefully joined our Lord
on January 27, 2007 at the age of 78.*

His loving wife **Lita**; children **Ruby & Joe Vanden Berk, Maita & Noli Alido, Marisol & Edward Louzado, Leonard & Karla Tiangco**; grandchildren; brother & sisters, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at St. Peter Memorial Homes, Quezon Ave., Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Wednesday, January 31, 2007 at the Eternal Garden Memorial Park, Baesa, Kalookan City after the 11:00 a.m. Mass at St. Peter Homes.

His ashes will be brought to his residence at Ronquillo Compound, Sta. Cruz, Cavite City on Thursday, February 1, 2007.

More Classified Ads:

Bases Conversion & Development Authority	Page B6
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	Page B6
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority	Page B6

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*"...yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand,
and my reward is in my God."*
Isaiah 49:4

PASCUAL R. ALVAREZ, M.D. FPCCP

October 03, 1923 – January 27, 2007

*Peacefully joined our Creator at the
Lung Center on his 83rd year.*

Loving husband of **Neny**, father of **Maricor**, **Gia** and **Peter**; grandfather of **Spike**, **Iris** and **Lance**. **Aling** will be sadly missed but lovingly remembered.

He worked at the Quezon Institute and the Lung Center of the Philippines for over 40 years.

Visitation: Mt. Carmel Church
Funeral Service: 10:00 a.m. on January 30, 2007
Interment: to follow at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City

The family invites friends and relatives to sign Dr. Alvarez's book of condolences at Mt. Carmel Church.

St. Luke's offers latest patient-friendly Lasik laser

GOOD NEWS FOR PEOPLE WITH poor vision who wish to permanently end their dependence on eyeglasses or contact lenses-safely, quickly and painlessly.

St. Luke's Medical Center recently acquired the latest Carl Zeiss Meditec Excimer Laser (MEL-80), making it the newest addition to the long list of state-of-the-art technologies available at St. Luke's International Eye Institute-Vision Laser Center.

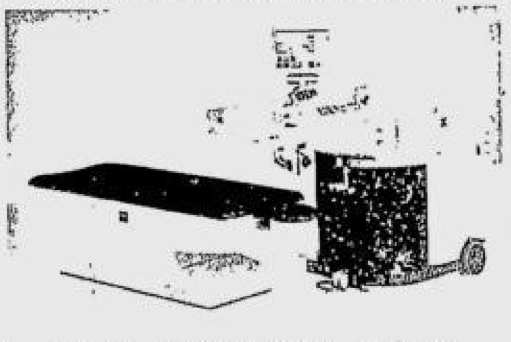
The MEL-80 Laser is designed to make the correction of vision defects exceptionally effective and patient-friendly. It is a step ahead of other currently available excimer lasers, with superior characteristics that make it extremely advanced. Because of the MEL-80's speed, the amount of time the cornea is exposed is reduced and the overall treatment procedure is significantly shortened. Additionally, the laser is able to preserve the natural curvature of the cornea, ultimately improving the quality of vision.

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved the MEL-80 for vision correction surgery. The FDA approval was based on impressive results of clinical studies involving patients who underwent laser eye surgery using the MEL-80 Laser. The studies showed that 93 percent of patients who underwent laser eye surgery using MEL-80 were corrected at three months to 20/20 or better visual acuity while 41 percent were corrected to 20/12.5 or better at six months. Eighty-five percent of patients achieved within one-half of a diopter (optical power measurement) of the intended correction at three months post-operative follow-up.

Refractive surgery

The shape of a person's eye determines how well his or her vision can focus. Light rays enter the eye through the clear cornea, then through the pupil and the lens. In a normal eye, the light rays are focused onto the retina, a light-sensitive tissue lining the back of the eye. Signals from the retina are sent through the optic nerve to the brain, where they are interpreted as the images we see.

When the curvature of the eye does not match the length of the eye and light rays cannot focus properly on the retina, a refractive error occurs. There are four types of refractive error: myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness), astigmatism (irregular shaped cornea), and presbyopia (age-related loss of close-up focusing ability).



Refractive surgery involves procedures that correct refractive errors by changing the focus of the eye either by altering the shape of the eye's front surface or adding a permanent lens to improve focus. These surgical procedures are designed to eliminate or reduce the need for glasses or contact lenses.

Lasik (Laser In Situ Keratomileusis) is currently the most popular procedure for correcting refractive errors. After numbing drops are applied to the patient's eye, a microkeratome creates a thin flap in the cornea. The excimer laser then sculpts the underlying cornea into a new shape to correct the refractive error. The average laser treatment time is 30 seconds.

The flap is then repositioned and adheres on its own without sutures after only a few minutes. Eye drops and/or ointment are placed in the eye to facilitate the healing process. There is no surface scraping done and discomfort is almost absent. Vision recovery is rapid, usually by the first or second day. There is little or no post-operative pain. Most patients are able to resume their daily activities the day following surgery.

20/20 vision at 20% discount

St. Luke's Vision Laser Center is offering a 20-percent discount on the regular MEL-80 Excimer Laser Surgery package cost (inclusive of professional fees). To avail of the promo, just call the center's hotline at 722-2965 and inquire about the procedure. You will then be given a pre-screening schedule at the center to check if you are a suitable candidate for standard/customized Lasik or PRK procedure under the MEL-80. Only suitable patients will be given the 20-percent discount on the regular package cost. Patients must undergo the procedure at the center within the promo period. Promo runs from Jan. 15 to 31.

Highest quality patient care

St. Luke's International Eye Institute-Vision Laser Center is the country's most technologically advanced refractive eye center. It is the only refractive eye center in the Philippines accredited by the prestigious Joint Commission International (JCI), which guarantees the highest quality of patient care and safety.

With its staff of highly trained experts and wide array of state-of-the-art equipment, the Center is capable of addressing the entire range of refractive errors. The Center is also equipped to manage patients who have had previous refractive surgery elsewhere.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call St. Luke's International Eye Institute-Vision Laser Center at 722-2965/telefax 727-5459, log on to www.2020.stluke.com.ph or e-mail info@stluke.com.ph.

GLOBAL AGENCY OF THE YEAR

Euro RSCG Worldwide has been named Global Agency of the Year by prestigious advertising trade publications Advertising Age of the USA and Campaign of the United Kingdom. The agency was selected based on international business growth, thought leadership and innovation by agency management, and creative and effective marketing campaigns for their clients. Shown rejoicing are local officials of Euro RSCG Manila, from left, Monique Ignacio, president; Charlie Agatep, chair; Ed Mapa Jr, managing partner and chief operating officer and Norman Agatep, managing director and chief creative officer.

Lactose intolerance is easy to treat

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED abdominal pains, cramps, diarrhea, nausea and the feeling of bloating right after drinking milk, eating ice cream and other dairy products containing lactose found in milk? Chances are, you might be suffering from a condition called "lactose intolerance" and may not know it, like millions of people around the world who are still "unaware" that they have this problem.

We keep hearing the term "lactose intolerance" but what is it exactly?

Lactose intolerance is defined by the National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse under the US Department of Health and Human Services as "the inability to digest significant amounts of lactose, the major sugar found in milk. It is usually caused by a shortage of the enzyme lactose, which is produced by the cells that line the small intestine."

People who do not have enough lactase to digest the amount of lactose they consume or take in may feel "very uncomfortable" whenever they digest any milk products. The symptoms normally begin 30 minutes to 2 hours after eating or drinking dairy products.

As a matter of fact, different people have different reactions to lactose intolerance and it usually depends on their age, ethnicity and digestive rate. Studies and researches done on lactose intolerance revealed that between 30 and 50 million Americans are lactose intolerant and certain ethnic and racial population are more affected than others, while almost 100 percent of Asians are affected by this condition.

Lactose intolerance can either be primary or secondary. The primary form occurs in otherwise healthy individuals who are unaware that they are suffering from lactose intolerance which develops over time. After age 2, our body begins to produce less lactase, though most of us do not notice symptoms until we experience them personally.

The secondary form occurs usually in associations with many gastrointestinal diseases "which decreases the amount of lactase a person produces." This explains why some people immediately feel like "running" to the nearest comfort room after consuming milk and other dairy products, which oftentimes cause them great embarrassment.

So if you feel you are among those people who are "lactose intolerant" and suffer from its discomfort every now and then, don't lose hope. The good news is, doctors and other medical experts worldwide are one in saying that "lactose intolerance is easy to treat."

And for those who react to very small amount of lactose or have trouble digesting them, the lactase enzyme is now available for everyone without prescription.

Lacteeze chewable lactase enzymes has recently been launched and is now exclusively available in all Mercury Drugstore outlets nationwide. It helps people digest food that contains lactose. Lacteeze also has a hotline text number where you can address your questions. Just send your text message or inquiries to 0917-8202020.

Back on top at 82: A celebration of San Beda champs!

SAN BEDA COLLEGE WILL BE celebrating its grand alumni homecoming on Feb. 24 at the Plaza Bedista (quadrangle), SBC Mendiola Campus. Highlighting the event will be a tribute to the NCAA 82nd season basketball champions-the San Beda Red Lions as well as the NCAA champs of the other sports events. High school classes of '57 and '82, the golden and silver jubilarians, respectively, will be co-hosting the event together with co-jubilarians HS '62, '67, '72, '77, '82, GS '57, CAS '82 and HS '82 of San Beda College Alabang. The 2007 San Beda College grand alumni homecoming, which will cap a week-long series of festivities, will start with the traditional alumni Mass at 4 p.m. For more information, call the SBC Alumni Office at 735-5995 or e-mail alain_maulion@yahoo.com or francis_estoesta@yahoo.com. Let the good times roar!

The Philippine World Building and Construction Exposition
WORLDBEX
March 14-18, 2
World Trade Center Metro Manila & Air-conditioned Tent

WORLDBEX, ECCP FOR CONSTRUCTION FAIR

The biggest and most awaited construction trade fair is near at hand as Worldbex Services International (WSI) and the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) recently renewed partnership for the 12th Philippine World Building and Construction Exposition (Worldbex 2007). The event is slated from March 14 to 18 at the World Trade Center and an adjoining air-conditioned tent, and at the Philippine Trade Training Center. Signing the deal are Joseph Ang (left), WSI founding chair, and Henry Schumacher, ECCP Executive Vice President. As Asia's indispensable source of information and technology in the construction field, WSI brings forth the most competent players in the industry with over 500 exhibitors from at least 20 countries and over 60,000 trade visitors with the support of 23 leading industry-related associations. For more information, call WSI at 531-6350; 534-3615; and 531-6374 or e-mail info@worldbex.com or log on to www.worldbex.com.

Her life in a portrait

As part of her lifetime study on the enduring strength and beauty of the Filipina, renowned artist Anita Magsaysay Ho, in cooperation with Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI), has organized an exhibition of hand coloring monoprints at Yuchengco Museum, Makati City. Mentored by Fernando and Pablo Amorsolo, Vicente Rivera, Ireneo Miranda and Fabian de la Rosa, Ho is considered one of the country's first female Modernists. Along with Ho's prints are photographs of the artist taken by well known celebrity and fashion photographer, Patrick Uy. Exhibit opened Jan. 27 and will run for a month.

'Hapag-Asa Caravan' scheduled Feb. 10

THE ASSISI DEVELOPMENT Foundation, in cooperation with His Excellency Cardinal Gaudencio B. Rosales' Pondo ng Pinoy, will organize "Hapag-Asa Caravan"-a special gathering to help create awareness, generate donations, increase participation and recruit volunteers for the Hapag-Asa Program.

Scheduled on Feb. 10 from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the San Carlos Seminary Gym, Guadalupe, Makati City, the cavaran will be headed by 13 Pondo ng Pinoy Dioceses, namely San Pablo, Parañaque, Antipolo, Pasig, Imus, Malolos, Caloocan, Novaliches, Cubao, Manila, Daet, Puerto Princesa and Vicariate of Taytay. Divided into two groups coming from the north and the south, approximately 2,000 participants are expected to traverse through Edsa leading to the venue to take part in the day's other activities, which includes the celebration of the Blessed Sacrament and various presentations relating to the Hapag-Asa program experience.

For more information, call the Hapag-Asa Program Secretariat at the Assisi Development Foundation, Unit 503 Prestige Tower, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City with telephone number 632-1001 to 03, fax 632-7844 or e-mail hapagasa@gmail.com. You may also get in touch with the Pondo ng Pinoy office at Rm. 313 Pope Pius XII Center, United Nations Avenue, Manila, with telefax 527-8114.

TEAM LBC
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mber 15, 20
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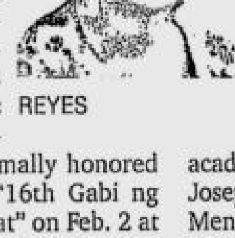
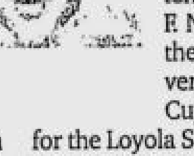
HSBC, LBC FORGE PARTNERSHIP

HSBC and LBC recently signed a memorandum of agreement Nov. 15, 2006 accrediting all LBC branches nationwide to accept HSBC credit card and HSBC loan payments from their customers. Present were (from left) Noel B. Atintar, chief financial officer, LBC Express; Janet T. Ong, chief development officer, LBC Express, Martin C. Cook, SVP and head of personal financial services (PFS), HSBC; and Claire Ann T. Yap, SVP PFS business development and support, HSBC.

2 outstanding teachers in awards night



REYES



TIROL

DR. SOLEDAD S. Reyes, professor of the Ateneo School of Humanities, and Jose Ma. Edito K. Tirol, instructor of the School of Social Sciences, join the elite roster of outstanding senior and junior teacher awardees of the Ateneo Schools Parents Council (Aspac). They will be formally honored and awarded at the "16th Gabi ng Parangal at Pasasalamat" on Feb. 2 at the PLDT-CTC Building, Ateneo De Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

The search for outstanding teachers began in 1991 and has, to date, 35 awardees. They are the best, the most capable and highly respected teachers of the Ateneo Loyola Schools. This yearly search is spearheaded by the academics committee of Aspac with Josephine Perez-Ang and Daisy E. Mendoza as president and committee chairperson, respectively, for the school year 2006-2007. Each awardee will receive a cash gift, a glass trophy of artist Ramon Orlina, a plaque of recognition and a set of Time-Life Illustrated Encyclopedia.

The Parangal at Pasasalamat will be attended by Fr. Bienvenido F. Nebres, SJ, president of the Ateneo De Manila University, Dr. Assunta C. Cuyegkeng, vice president for the Loyola Schools, the deans of the four Loyola Schools, faculty, academic and administration staff, the Aspac board of directors, the students and the families of the awardees.

Canon Pixma promo

CANON, THE LEADER IN DIGITAL IMAGING AND printing solutions, gives consumers instant treats from McDonald's and a chance to win an all expense paid trip to shopping central Singapore with the "Canon Pixma Print & Win Promo" running until Jan. 31. Every purchase of a Canon Pixma Printer will entitle consumers to receive a free McDonald's Cheeseburger Meal. These treats from McDonald's are redeemable via SMS registration. Every valid mobile registration received for both printers and genuine inks and papers entitles customers to one E-raffle stub for the grand raffle draw. To register, consumers simply have to text in CANON <the authentication code>/<product serial code>/<store name>/<store location> and send to 2966. The grand raffle draw will be held on Feb. 21 at the Global Wireless Connections, 22/F Tycoon Center Condominium, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Therapharma launches new drug against diabetes

Beefing up its cardiometabolic therapeutic armamentarium, Therapharma, a division of Unilab, celebrated the first anniversary of Norizec (glimepiride) with the launch of Norsulin, the country's first and only combination of glipizide and metformin Oct. 11, 2006 at the Century Park Hotel in Manila.

With the theme, "Stronger together: A salute to power and partnership," the launch of Norsulin, an oral combination medicine, will help Filipinos achieve better glycemic control and help prevent complications of diabetes.

According to Dr. Rodolfo Paoletti, president of the International Atherosclerosis Society and guest speaker during the launch, studies found that the tandem tablet (glipizide/metformin combination) yield positive results in improving glycemic control of type 2 diabetics whose diet, exercise and monotherapy don't work. Glipizide, an insulin secretagogue which binds SU receptors in beta cells, is considered an intermediate-acting sulfonylurea (SU). Its beta-cell function is significantly preserved via meal-stimulated insulin response and minimally preserved through fasting insulin. Metformin, on the other hand, is an insulin sensitizer which lowers hepatic glucose production and gluconeogenesis. This component increases peripheral glucose uptake and utilization and decreases intestinal absorption of glucose.

Dr. Paoletti cited factors of poor glycemic control which include inadequate or inappropriate management of diabetes, poor medical follow-up, lack of awareness on the severity of the disease and poor compliance with diet, exercise and medication. He also noted the importance of adapting a combination therapy rather than the traditional monotherapy.

Therapharma, together with the other Unilab divisions, have pledged to fulfill their commitment to the medical community and the Filipino patients to provide effective and affordable alternatives in the long-term treatment of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and cholesterol problems. The availability of Norsulin, shown to be bioequivalent to reference brands which are already tried and tested, is a welcome option for diabetic patients in managing their blood sugar and enjoying a better quality of life.

AFP MOTOR VEHICLE OWNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Armed Forces of the Philippines recently signed a memorandum of agreement with Toyota Motor Philippines Corp and LBP Leasing Corp for the AFP Motor Vehicle Ownership Program. Under the MOA, LBP Leasing will design and provide a car financing package for qualified AFP personnel and employees so that they may acquire Toyota vehicles and pay through monthly salary deductions. The MOA was signed by (from right) AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes C. Esperon, Jr, Toyota Motor Philippines president Hiroshi Ito, and LBP Leasing Corp president Manuel H. Lopez.

David Pomeranz, Zsa Zsa Padilla: The 'King and Queen of Hearts'

IT'S A CASTING COUP AND A match that's made for Valentine. David Pomeranz and Zsa Zsa Padilla together in one magical night of music at the Isla Ballroom of the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel on Feb. 9, Friday at 8 p.m. in a dinner concert titled "King and Queen of Hearts".

This is the first time ever that David and Zsa Zsa will be performing together in a concert, and both artists are really excited about doing it. David Pomeranz, world-renowned singer-composer who gave us such unforgettable hits like "Got To Believe In Magic", "Old Songs", "Trying To Get The Feeling Again", "Born For You", "On This Day", and "King and Queen Of Hearts", is no stranger to Filipino audiences. He has extensively toured and performed in almost all the major concert venues in the country and has enjoyed consistent record sales from his numerous albums. He has been kept busy in his home base in the United States with numerous songwriting commitments as well as writing music for off-Broadway musicals. And despite a three-year absence from performing in the Philippines, David's concert tour last August 2006 was a smashing success, an enduring testament to his timeless appeal. In fact, his last tour not only gave David a chance to touch base with his long time fans in the Philippines but also a chance to meet and make new fans as well.

Zsa Zsa Padilla, on the other hand, has been consistently busy with her television commitments, recordings, films and product endorsements. Endearingly dubbed as the "Divine Diva", Zsa Zsa has continued to evolve as an artist. From band vocalist to solo singer to an award-winning and multi-platinum recording star to award-winning actress to celebrity product endorser, all in one divine and stunningly beautiful package. Her hit recordings like "Hiram", "Kahit Na", "Point of No Return", "Mambobola" among many others have become standard classics and have elevated her to musical icon status.

In "King and Queen of Hearts", expect a night of classic Pomeranz and Zsa Zsa songs plus medleys and production numbers specially arranged for this once-in-a-lifetime performance. Concert direction is by Freddie Santos.

David Pomeranz and Zsa Zsa Padilla, timeless music with timeless appeal together in a timeless celebration of the heart. On Feb. 9, fall in love all over again. Spend your Valentine with the King and Queen of Hearts.

Tickets for the "King and Queen of Hearts" dinner concert are available at the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel, all Ticketnet outlets (911-5555) and at Ultimate Entertainment at 747-6189 and 0917-8253838 (look for Omie Versoza).

All Club Edsa Shangri-la members are entitled to 20-percent discount on VIP tickets. Call Club Edsa at 636-9029 and look for Carlo Reyes.

Also catch David Pomeranz in a solo dinner concert on Feb. 10 Saturday at the Hard Rock Café. Tickets available at Hard Rock Café (893-4661), all Ticketnet outlets and at Ultimate Entertainment.

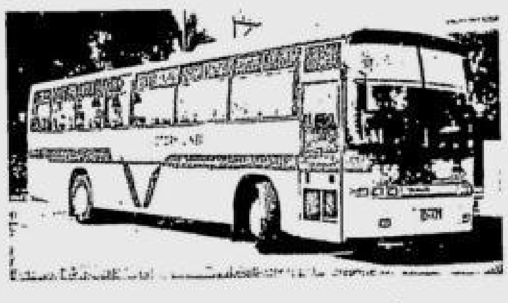
CHIEF JUSTICE INDUCTS 2007-2008 UP ALPHA PHI BETA OFFICERS

Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno inducts the incoming officers of the UP Alpha Phi Beta Fraternity Chancery for 2007-2008 led by Lord Chancellor Pastor 'Mar' Reyes Jr (center) at the Wack Wack Golf Club, Mandaluyong City, Jan. 15. Also shown are (from left) PCSO Assistant General Manager Conrado Zabella, NTC Deputy Commissioner Jorge Sarmiento, lawyer Ramon Gonzaga Jr, vice chancellor for finance Caesar N. Agnir Jr, lawyer Purisimo Buyco, auditor general Pedro Dela Cruz Jr, secretary general Percival Rosales, vice chancellor for internal affairs Alex Lopez, former Comelec Commissioner Julio Desamito and vice chancellor for external affairs Ramon Esguerra.

ASIANA AIRLINES HONORS TOP IATA AGENT

Multi-awarded Asiana Airlines (OZ) recently honored industry partners and colleagues with a celebration in Century Park Sheraton. The airline, which flies out from Manila, Cebu and Clark, Pampanga, awarded top performing travel agencies from the Philippines and Korea for 2006. Photo shows Rakso Air Travel administration manager Rosella Sotelo-Gabutan (right) accepting their award as Top IATA Agent with (from left) Asiana Airlines regional manager Tae Yup Kim and Transnational Diversified Group founder and group chair J. Roberto Delgado.

Baguio's flora: A travel must-see



BAGUIO HAS TRULY reclaimed its title as the summer capital of the Philippines in recent years, rising from the ashes of the destructive earthquake that changed the course of its tourism and commercial industries. Thanks in big part to local government efforts that stepped up the promotion of its well-known and well-loved regional products, and together with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's visible presence and personal preference for relaxing in the region, Baguio is once again the coolest place to be in the Philippines during vacations and holidays.

With the start of 2007 comes anticipation for Baguio's annual, much-anticipated Panagbenga festival-a celebration of the region's rich natural resource of flowers and plants. It is a time when Baguio's citizens are joined by local and foreign tourists alike on the streets, parading with colorful floats that showcase roses, chrysanthemum, anthurium, and even fruits such as strawberries and leafy vegetables. Baguio's cool and clean climate still makes it the undisputed source for the best and most varied flora in the country.

This year, the Baguio Street Dancing activity will be held on Feb. 24, preceding the actual Panagbenga Festival featuring the colorful Float Parade slated on Feb. 25.

Baguio is best explored as one with the locals, and being a mountainous area, backpacking and travel on foot is the best and most exciting experience especially during the Panagbenga festival. Why not ditch your private car or van for a more intimate experience with nature and the adventures of a real road trip?

Victory Liner is the best and most trusted bus travel network in Luzon, with over 16 terminals in convenient and strategic locations and a reliable fleet of 600 buses. Moreover, aside from standard buses, Victor Liner boasts of a deluxe line with ultra-comfortable seats and clean, onboard rest rooms for the ultimate in travel convenience.

Most importantly, travel on Victory Liner for a trip to the Panagbenga festival and enjoy the unparalleled ease of ensuring a place to stay in Baguio at the Microtel Inn & Suites, right beside the newly built Victory Liner Passenger Center at Session Road. Victory Liner's synergy with the US-based brand of practical and affordable bed-and-breakfast economy hotel is the perfect solution to travel woes and hassles. Prepare travel and lodging plans way in advance and achieve more time to enjoy the actual sights and experiences of the destination.

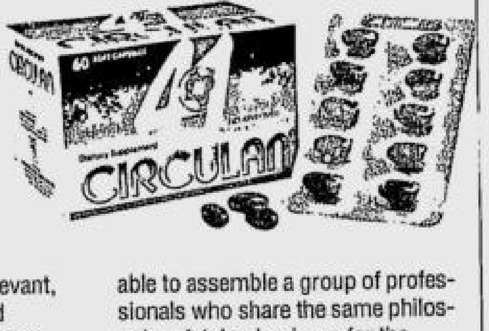
For bus reservations, visit any Victory Liner terminal or call its dedicated customer service hotline at 0917-VICLINE (8425463), and to book a stay at Microtel Inn, e-mail sales@microtelphilippines.com or call their Metro Manila offices at (632) 810-9526 or 813-7523.

ProductFILES

Sun Cellular's latest handset model

CAN FUNCTIONALITY, DESIGN and budget be combined in one cellphone? Sun Cellular answers that question with the LG KG 220 mobile handset, Sun's latest handset offer that will entice even the most stylish and tech savvy individual with its sleek design and features. The LG KG 220 handset will connect you to family, friends and co-workers with ease and style. This black with silver trim, clamshell, triband handset is ultra lightweight. It has both camera and video capabilities including built-in flash and a multi-shot feature, which will take several pictures with just one click. The unit also boasts of a crystal clear, 65k colored display and has MMS, GPRS and WAP capabilities. It has a standby time of 200 hours and can store up to 500 phone book entries. Other important features of the LG KG 220 include T9, Calculator, Voice Memo, World Time and Unit Converter. Excited about its features? There's more! The LG KG 220 is available for free at Plan 350 and Load Up, Own-a-Phone 350. It is also one of the highlighted phones in Sun Group Plan 999 where the subscriber gets to have three mobile handsets at a low price of only P999. This truly is amazing value for money -- only from Sun Cellular. The LG KG 220 is now available through Sun's postpaid service in all 41 outlets of The Sun Shop. To subscribe, just present a valid ID and your latest competitor bill or proof of billing and income. You may also call Sun's hotline at 395-8000 for more information.

Macropharma: Moving to give Filipinos better choices for a better life



MACROPHARMA Corp is a company that believes quality of life is a fundamental right of every human being. Hence, the company embarked seven years ago on a mission to provide the Filipino people with some of the latest, most relevant, reliable and evidence-based medicines and other health care products at reasonable prices. As it believes that maintaining a healthy circulatory system results in a more improved health and well-being, Macropharma has introduced five years ago the product aptly called Circulan 4-in-1. Circulan 4-in-1 contains natural potent ingredients that help lower blood pressure and cholesterol, strengthen the heart, fight stress and boost physical alertness. One capsule of Circulan 4-in-1 is advised to be taken at least twice a day for best results. Young as it is, the company takes pride in being able to assemble a group of professionals who share the same philosophy of doing business for the greater good and guided by ethical principles of business and social responsibility. Its select business partners - B Braun Medical Supplies Inc and Metro Drug Inc - are among the most respected medical supply and distribution companies in the field, who also share the same business philosophy as theirs. Indeed, Macropharma assures that Filipinos may have better choices for a better life as it continues to provide ways to bring affordable solutions to achieve and maintain good health and productivity.

Creative's Xmod improves MP3 sound

CREATIVE, A WORLDWIDE leader in digital entertainment products, announced it has invented the Creative Xmod, a device that improves music playback quality for MP3, WMA, iTunes or AAC songs to beyond the original CD quality.

Just about the size of a candy bar, the Creative Xmod connects between stereo speakers, headphones, PC, Mac, iPod, ZEN or any MP3 player and dramatically improves the listening experience by converting the music during playback to the X-Fi Xtreme Fidelity audio platform, giving a high-quality 24-bit surround audio.

The Creative Xmod enhances the low and high frequencies while improving audio dynamics to produce cleaner, richer sound that surpasses the original audio CD. The Creative Xmod doesn't require any software installation or time consuming conversion of files. It just takes seconds to connect to a PC or a MAC to playback existing music files into X-Fi Xtreme Fidelity format. However, to connect the Creative Xmod to an iPod, ZEN or any MP3 player, an optional AC power adaptor is required.

"Millions of people today listen to MP3, WMA or AAC music on their PCs, Macs or iPod or ZEN players, but the quality of these compressed music are highly compromised. The Creative Xmod enables them to listen to their music with audio that sounds even better than CDs," said Sim Wong Hoo, chair and CEO of Creative.

X-Fi Xtreme Fidelity technology provides two audio functions that enhance the audio quality of digital music files. X-Fi Crystalizer intelligently and selectively restores the highs and lows of the sound such as the snare drums, basses, cymbals crashes and guitar plucking that are damaged during the compression of the audio sound to MP3. The X-Fi CMSS-3D creates virtual surround sound through speakers or headphones.

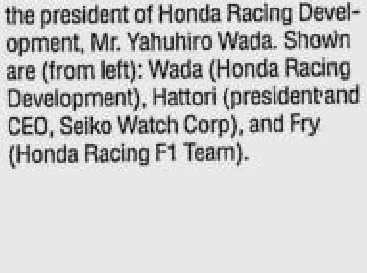
For more information about the Creative Xmod and X-Fi Xtreme Fidelity, visit www.asia.creative.com.

HAPPI LUCKY, CHINESE FAST FOOD RESTAURANT, OPENS AT SM MALL OF ASIA

Chinese food lovers will surely be pleased to find another dining destination in the metropolis - Happi Lucky. The fast food restaurant, which serves delicious Chinese fare at budget-friendly prices, recently opened its first branch at the South Wing of the Main Mall in SM Mall of Asia. The ceremonial opening rites were led by Richmond S. Yang, managing director of Happi Lucky Corp. Also present to join in on the festivities were board of directors Luigi Vera, Robert Epes and Carrie C. Yang, director for operations Rachel Fallarme and Jack Ng of Earth & Style. The restaurant's adorable mascots Happi and Lucky welcomed well-wishers and had fun with the guests. Visit Happi Lucky and enjoy dishes of real Chinese flavor and great value for your money. The restaurant's bright and trendy atmosphere makes dining pleasurable. For inquiries, tel. nos. call 556-0588.

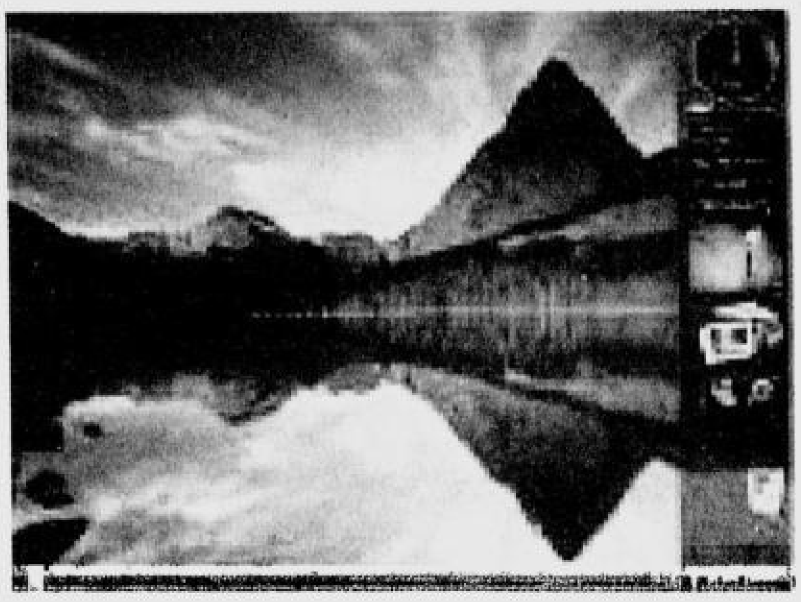
SEIKO CELEBRATES RELEASE OF SPORTURA

August 2006 saw the release into the market of the new Sportura 1/100th second chronograph, a watch designed expressly for the world of high-performance motor sport. This remarkable timepiece, like all models in the Sportura collection, is designed for speed. It has the iconic Sportura easy-to-read dial, a sleek aerodynamic contour and a unique dial layout, designed to help accurate times to be read easily and quickly, even at the race track. And so it was that Monza, the last Grand Prix in Europe this season, was a natural choice as the location for the celebration of the consumer release of the new 7T82 caliber. During the gala celebration the night before the race, Mr. Hattori and Kenji Hagiwara presented Sportura Chronographs to the CEO of the Honda Racing F1 team, Nick Fry and to the president of Honda Racing Development, Mr. Yahuhiro Wada.



Shown are (from left): Wada (Honda Racing Development), Hattori (president and CEO, Seiko Watch Corp), and Fry (Honda Racing F1 Team).

Windows Vista opens to a landscape of exciting possibilities



MICROSOFT'S new products, Windows Vista and the 2007 Microsoft Office System, were created with the end-user in mind.

The new operating system and office suite are designed with improved security, reliable infrastructure, modified search and organization options, and mobile connectivity.

Microsoft is slated to launch the business version of Windows Vista and Office 2007 on Feb. 1.

On Feb. 3, it will make the products available to the public.

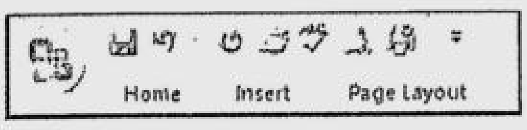
For someone constantly on the go, time is a commodity and it is convenient to be able to do what one sets out to do as quickly and as easily as possible.

Microsoft's newest products create big possibilities of changing the way we do things.

Windows Vista

The most obvious difference between Vista and its predecessor, Windows XP, is the appearance of the new operating system.

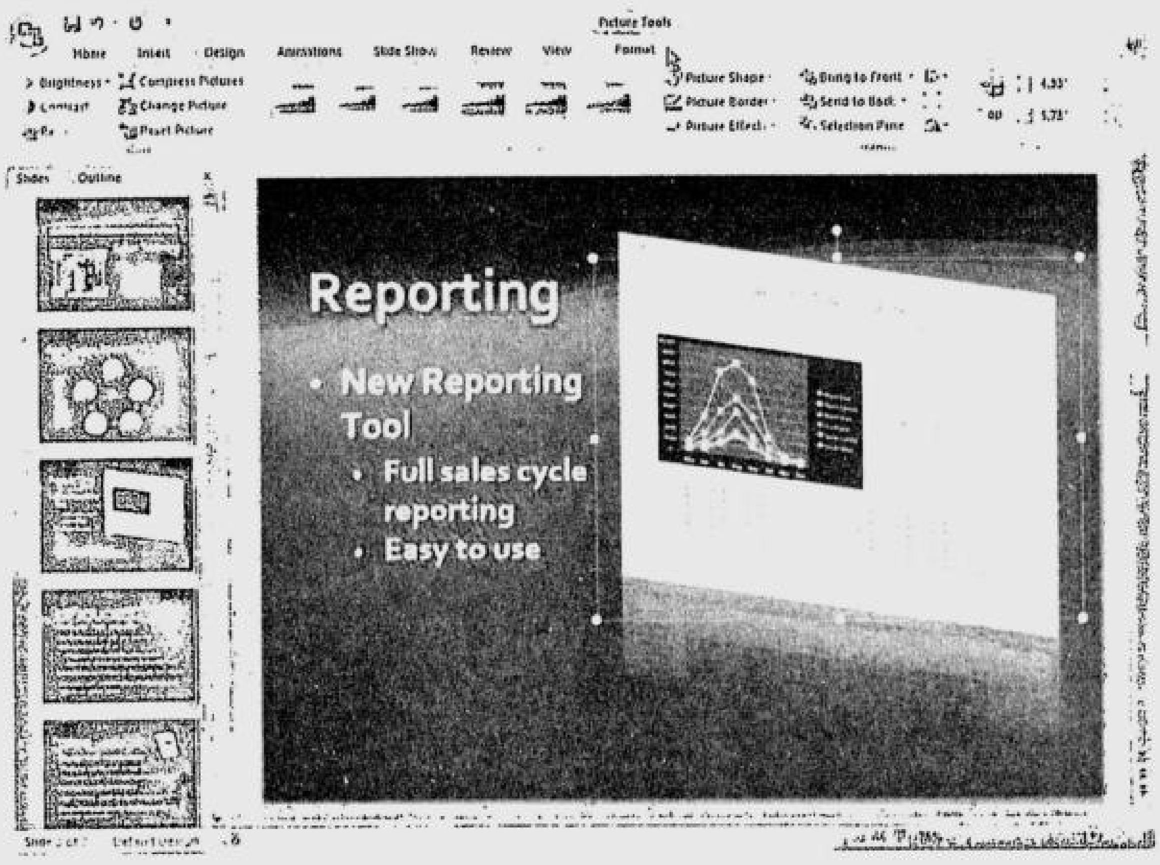
Vista uses Windows Aero, an environment that provides an elegant display, one that is even more responsive and manageable, providing a further level of clarity and confidence to Windows users. It provides spectacular visual effects, such as glass-like interface elements, that you can see through.



The starting point of the operating system is the Start Menu, which experienced an overhaul in Windows Vista.

The new Start Menu is a lifesaver for people who've misplaced or forgotten where their files are saved. Vista's Start menu has an integrated desktop search called Instant search, which can help one look for anything saved on your PC, and navigate through the various programs and files.

Pictures, music, documents and programs may be easily accessed from the start menu without having to go through folders.



Reporting
- New Reporting Tool
  - Full sales cycle reporting
  - Easy to use

The Flip 3D function is much like the ALT+TAB function of Windows XP, except that, instead of seeing the icon and file name being displayed, users can navigate through the different open windows with the use of a live thumbnail of each window.

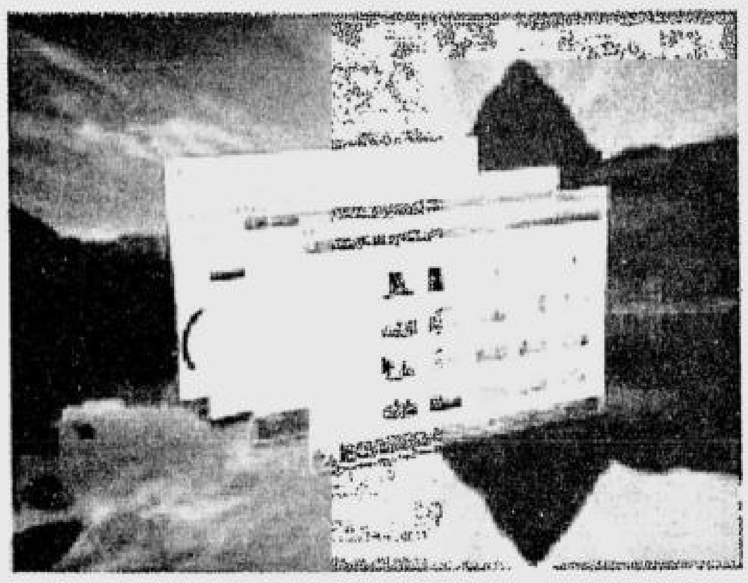
This feature is also accessible by using the scroll wheel of the mouse to flip through the open windows, which appear in a stack. Users can easily locate and select the application or program windows they need.

Sidebar

Users can also easily customize their computing experience.

With Windows Sidebar—a pane on the side of the desktop—users can easily organize gadgets and favorite information like live stock market feeds, sports updates, music videos and even games.

It can be thought of as being your own personal space, with shortcuts to all your favorites and frequently-used tools and applications.



Also, Windows Vista appeals to the entertainment enthusiast, with the Windows Media Center and Windows Media Player.

With these programs, fans can go to this one-stop digital multimedia hub. Through the Media Center, users can watch videos, create music discs, listen to the radio, play games and look through pictures.

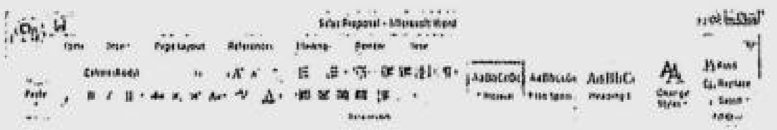
It is interoperable with many gadgets, such as the video and digital camera, a flat screen TV, video game consoles, stereos, speakers and more.

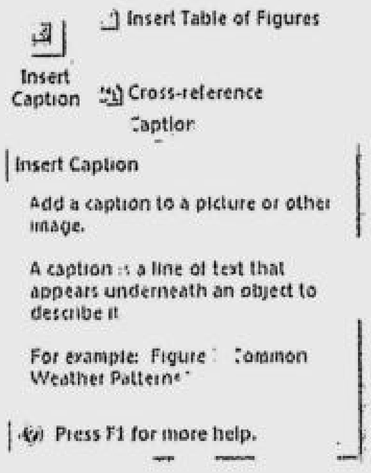
2007 Microsoft Office

This latest version of the Microsoft Office is the best of its kind yet.

Designed to help simplify work and information exchange, Microsoft Office 2007 could spell the difference for organizations aiming for business success.

This office suite improves overall business processes with the promise of simplicity and security.





Insert Caption

Add a caption to a picture or other image.

A caption is a line of text that appears underneath an object to describe it.

For example: Figure 1: Common Weather Patterns

Press F1 for more help.

Microsoft Office Word 2007, Office Excel 2007, Office PowerPoint 2007, Office Outlook 2007, will feature a streamlined and organized work environment that is results-driven. This is evident in the improved user interface used in the office system.

Ribbon

The Ribbon replaces the traditional menus and toolbars in the 2003 installment of Office.

In Microsoft's current offering, applications are accessible through tabs displaying the commands that are relevant per task area.

In the case of page layout in Word, users can click on the Page Layout tab to change the overall appearance of a document.

The new user interface also uses Contextual Tabs, an intelligent feature that provides options only when they are needed, and when they are possible. For example, the appearance of a chart can only be modified when it is inserted in a document.

Another notable improvement is the Office Button which replaces the File Menu, usually located on the top left-most area of an Office application.

This is more convenient to use as Office's tools made available, whether working on a document, spreadsheet, presentation or database.

Galleries

Unless one has a favorite font or graph or chart that he or she frequently uses, creating presentations and documents that are visually stimulating requires not only thought into content but also design.

Sometimes, the right kind of color or display, entices on-lookers to take interest in the presentation.

With Galleries and the Live preview—the redesigning feature of Office—formatting and re-formatting presentations are a breeze.

Galleries provide a visual preview of how documents and spreadsheets are going to look like with a single click by moving a mouse pointer over the Gallery options.

This makes creating professional-looking work streamlined and efficient without having to format repeatedly before getting the desired results.

Enhanced ScreenTips

With the customizable Quick Access Toolbar, users can place frequently-used commands and features. This toolbar is accessible on The Ribbon.

Lastly, Office's Enhanced ScreenTips provide detailed information about the feature and illustrate what the feature does with a picture or diagram.

ScreenTips is like a mini-help menu and points the user to more comprehensive options in the help menu.

Microsoft's two flagship programs—Windows Vista and the 2007 Microsoft Office System—ushers in the arrival of digital living.

With these highly-improved features that make every action easier and convenient, the user's computing experience will be raised to a new level of efficiency and elegance not present in existing programs, promising to provide ease of use and convenience.

With Vista and Office 2007, these promises have come true and the possibilities are endless.

Mr. & Ms. to launch digital edition

MR. & MS., ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S TOP 10 magazines, has announced the launch of its digital replica edition, Mr. & Ms. ActiveMag.

In March, it will join the ranks of the Australian Financial Review, Financial Times Europe, and SingTao Newscorp Hong Kong, all of which have digital editions powered by the state-of-the-art Active Paper Technology.

The magazine is the first Philippine print publication to have a digital edition using the new technology—something that has never been tried by local publications.

"Since our population is becoming more computer savvy, the time has come to put up a digital edition, which will allow us to offer our readers and advertisers the opportunity to select a news format that meets their growing needs," said Eugenia Duran-Apostol, publisher and editor of Mr. & Ms. "This, in addition to extending our geographic reach and exploring new markets beyond our traditional circulation areas."

The renowned journalist-freedom fighter, 2006 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts, and Time Magazine Asian Hero, founded the magazine in 1976.

Apostol tapped Melbourne-based online technology company Smedia Pty. Ltd. to digitize the 30-year-old magazine.

Smedia is a technology partner in Australia, New Zealand and Greater Asia, of Olive Software, the global leader in content management, ePublishing and archiving technologies, and Picturesafe, a leading Digital Asset Management Systems provider.

"The beauty of the Active Paper Technology is that it enables users to easily publish rich electronic publications," Smedia Managing Director Francis Armstrong explained. "It allows one to create true-to-print materials.

"This means that all the components of the print version, including the entire set of news stories, photos and advertisements, are replicated completely in the online version. Thus, Mr. & Ms. will be able to provide its readers with a new medium which comes with the same old look and feel that readers have learned to appreciate over the years."

More than just a website, the digital version comes in a highly interactive format to address the needs of today's internet-savvy generation.

"It is enriched with multimedia, as well as hyperlinks, which connect to additional features online," Armstrong said.

Advertisers, he added, also stand to benefit from the digital edition as TV and radio commercials may now be incorporated into their Mr. & Ms. ActiveMag advertisements.

The digitization forms part of Mr. & Ms.'s continuing effort to offer a magazine tailored to fit the changing times.

Known as the Super-monthly of the Body, Mind and Spirit, Mr. & Ms. has a circulation of 80,000, and is distributed all over the country, as well as in other parts of Asia, the United States, Canada, England and the Middle East.

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Best time for RP to catch up with richer neighbors is now

By Doris C. Dumlao

CAN THE PHILIPPINES EVER catch up with its fast-growing neighbors in Asia? The chief economist of the World Bank thinks now is the golden opportunity to do so.

"We believe it is time for the country to adopt what we could call the Asian type of very faster growth and there is no doubt there's enough dynamism and enegry in this country for this to be possible and we certainly hope that this is certainly what will happen," World Bank senior vice president and chief economist Francois Bourguignon says.

Bourguignon, a French man, was recently in town to speak at a lecture-forum—a partnership between the Philippine Economic Society and the World Bank—on the role of equity in development. The French economist was in Manila for the very first time and took the chance to meet with economic managers.

The Philippine government, he believes, has done a "fantastic" progress in improving its macroeconomic fundamentals, reversing the trend of ballooning debts and fiscal deficits in the last two years.

Bourguignon says the country shall benefit from a global economy that has been on an uptrend since the millennium—and that which was likely to be sustained in the years ahead—as well as the impetus provided by the two fastest-growing economies in the region, China and India.

"Today, the macroeconomic situation in the Philippines is

BEST TIME/ B2-2

What firms need from business schools today

By Eduardo A. Morató Jr.
Contributor

CREATIVITY, INTUITION, TECHnology and innovation will be the mantra of 21st century business corporations. Entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship will be the imperatives of growth and competitiveness as the tempo of change hastens and customers discard "old lamps for new."

This has implications in the academe and the conduct of management education.

Already, there have been treatises written about the shift from the B-School to the D-School—traditional business functions will no longer suffice for the 21st century manager. He must continuously design new products and services, design new processes and methods, design better delivery systems and customer servicing styles.

He must periodically make his organization obsolete to get that extra competitive edge and regularly reinvent the marketplace to render competitors obsolete.

The third millennium manager must be a whole brain person. In the model of Ned Hermann, this means proficiency and mastery of the four brain quadrants: 1. very high logical, analytical, critical, evaluative and systematic thinking skills; 2. excellent doing skills, all the way from planning to detailed execution; 3. masterful people skills or the adroit ability to mobilize, motivate, mentor, measure, mix and match people to bring out their best potentials; and 4. superbly entrepreneurial, wholistic, creative and intuitive minds that trailblaze and dazzle the world.

To address the education needs of the whole brain manager, antiquated learning methods must yield to daring and more relevant approaches. This would certainly confuse the management professor whose training and teaching paradigm belong to the unidimensional realm of logical problem analysis and problem solving.

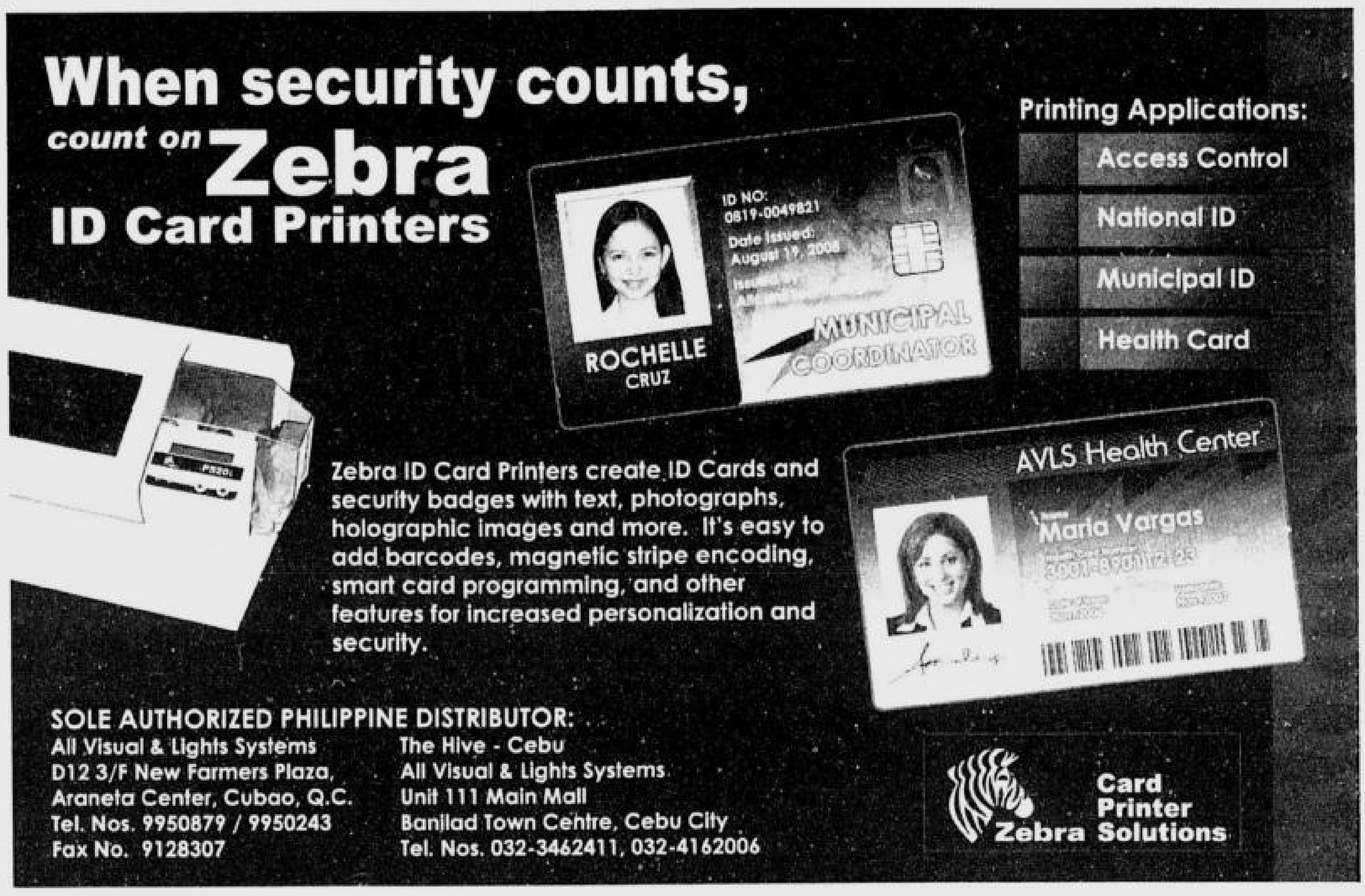
In business schools, there are three prevailing teaching modes: First is transmitting knowledge through lectures and gauging management proficiency through tests and exams. The second tries to make management a science by adopting quantitative techniques that reduce management into identifiable, controllable and manipulable variables. The third uses the case method with its heuristic approach to problem analysis and decision-making that emphasize logical thinking skills.

The three approaches are painfully anorexic in developing and honing the three other quadrants of the brain.

Doing skills, people sensitivity and handling abilities, creative and intuitive thinking and nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit are missing from business schools.

For doing skills, MBA schools and corporate universities are beginning to follow the footsteps of technical training institutes, which pioneered the "dual training method." After formal classroom training sessions, students apply their learnings in

WHAT FIRMS/ B2-2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Country above self

MAPping the Future

Albert F. del Rosario

PLEASE LET ME BEGIN BY HUMBLY THANKing you for your attendance in this MAP 2007 induction.

For five years in Washington, DC, during the busiest time of my life, we were fully occupied in addressing international diplomacy challenges encompassing the development and execution of our foreign policy with the United States. We had to work with large and diverse constituencies. We had to build consensus, often between conflicting interest groups. We had to negotiate complex bureaucracies here and abroad. My mission was as challenging as it was satisfying, but I am glad to be home.

Upon returning, high in my priority list was my desire to continue in my advocacy of strengthening our institutions, and so I believe that the Lord has been most kind in bringing me together with MAP in such a short time. For being His instruments in directing me to MAP, I would like to thank my good friends, Manny Pangilinan and Cesar Buenaventura.

For 2007, the MAP board was unanimous in retaining the theme of "Country Above Self." In these challenging times, this is a continuing call to action. To substantiate this theme, we will rally our members to undertake the right initiatives to benefit our country and emphasize the practice and promotion of leadership by example.

Under the theme "Country Above Self," we will forge ahead with a three-fold thrust:

1) Good governance,
2) Corporate social responsibility and
3) Enhancing membership benefits.

On good governance: a) MAP will continue to be the voice and conscience of business and to advocate reforms particularly those which are within the purview of management excellence; and b) we will continue to undertake projects that recognize companies and individuals especially those that practice and promote the values of honesty, integrity, sincerity, transparency, accountability and fairness.

Currently we recognize the Best Annual Reports, Management Man of the Year, and we hope to be able to consider expanding recognition to those companies which are exemplary in promoting corporate social responsibility, good labor practices, and environmental awareness.

On corporate social responsibility, MAP will continue to undertake more projects that focus on countryside development:

a) MAP plans to conduct with AIM more teachers' training workshops;

b) MAP intends to establish affiliations or chapters in Mindanao; and

c) MAP is now exploring how it can promote greater microfinance services in the countryside. We expect that supporting microfinance will be an important future initiative of MAP.

On enhancing membership benefits, our overall objective is to satisfy existing members and attract new ones:

a) MAP will continue to be the venue for continuing education and sharing of new technology on management leadership;

b) it will also be a venue for networking among members for possible business opportunities; c) MAP will pursue its own publication series to disseminate trends and best practices; and

d) in addition, MAP will enhance its cooperation with the Asian Association of Management Organizations and focus on reactivating its affiliation with the American Management Association.

While we will pursue the programs started last year, we will initiate new projects so that membership in MAP can be a more enriching experience.

Finally, it will be our aim to aggressively grow our membership while working at the same time for increased participation in our activities.

At this critical juncture in our national development, our country is strongly relying on Philippine business to play a positive, inspiring, and active role in nation building. With the determination of 760 members, a clear mandate and a set of meaningful programs, MAP fully intends to fulfill its role.

Again, on behalf of the 2007 board represented by Ed Chua, Bal Endriga, Senen Bacani, Chit Juan, Franco del Rosario, Do Ejercito, Cesar Purisima, Jun Palafox and myself, we thank you for your trust and confidence.

(Edited inaugural address of author, the new president of MAP during its inaugural meeting and induction. The author is chair of Gotuaco del Rosario & Associates. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

MOVEMENTS

New TMAP president

ISLA LIPANA & CO./PRICEWATERhouseCoopers Tax Principal lawyer Mary Assumption Bautista-Villareal was recently inaugurated as president of the Tax Management Association of the Philippines (TMAP).

TMAP is the premier professional organization of tax practitioners, multinationals, large taxpayers and conglomerates doing business in the Philippines.

Bautista-Villareal, who obtained her Bachelor of Laws degree (Cum Laude) from the San Sebastian College, Manila, has over 25 years of experience in tax consultancy work and business advisory services.

Also to be inducted into office are: Laura Victoria Layug (Baniqued & Baniqued), Ma. Criselda Guhit (PLDT), Agnes Le Oxales (First Philippine Holdings), and Euney Marie Mata-Perez (Salvador Guevara & Associates). To be sworn in as board members are Jewel Baga (DBP), Dennis Dimagiba (Quisumbing Torres), Belinda Dugan (CalEnergy), Romeo Duran (Punongbayan & Araullo), Gerardo Espiridion (Coca-Cola Bottlers), Cynthia de la Paz (Picazo Buyco Law Office), Millard Mansiguiao (Diaz Murillo Dalupan), Alfredo Pio de Roda (Quasha Ancheta), Priscilla Valer (Romulo Mabanta) and Ma. Victoria Villaluz (SGV & Co.).

New sales executives

Philam Plans Inc. president and CEO Jack I. Howell recently announced the appointment of Mr. Rico T. Bautista as vice president for Regional Sales—One Manila and Luzon and Mr. Rolando C. Ramos as vice president for Regional Sales—Visayas and Mindanao.

Bautista joined Philam Plans in 1997 as a training officer and was promoted in the same year to regional manager for southern Tagalog. He then moved up the sales management ladder to become assistant vice president for Manila North Sales Division in 2003, and was promoted to SAVP and territory head for north Luzon in 2004. Concurrent with his present responsibilities, Bautista will also oversee the Business Development and Sales Support areas of Philam Plans. Bautista earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila.

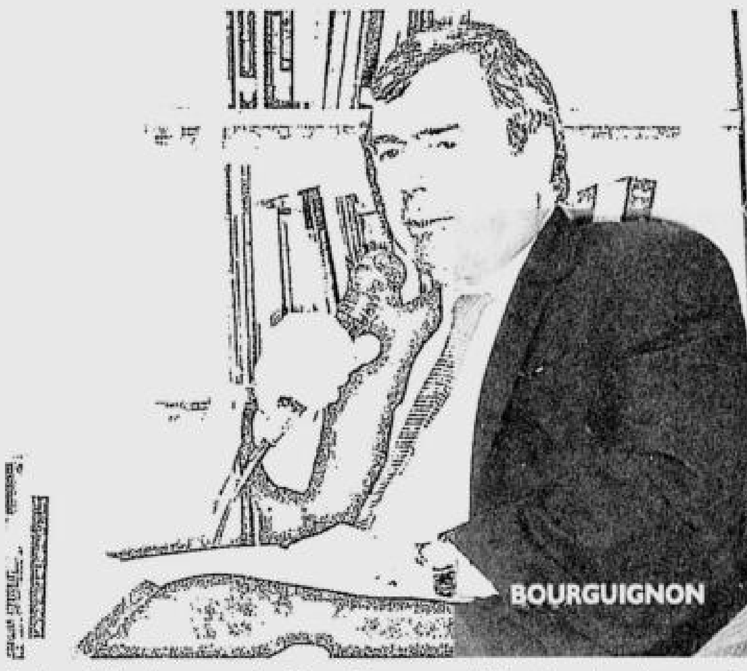
Ramos returns to Philam Plans after previously serving the company as Division Head for Metro Manila Sales from 1993 to 1996 and brings with him over 20 years of experience in sales and marketing in the financial services industry. He was previously with Philam Plans' affiliate Philam Equitable Life Assurance Co. (Pelac) as VP & regional manager for Manila & south Luzon. Ramos earned his BS Commerce degree at San Sebastian College and his MBA at Ateneo Graduate School of Business.

Best time for RP to catch…

From page B2-1

quite encouraging. After several years which has been difficult for this country following the Asian crisis of 1997 and following some political events, of political instability, the Philippines may be now in position to take full advantage of global situation I was describing," Bourguignon says.

In its latest East Asia Update, the World Bank has projected that the country could post a gross domestic product growth of 5.7 percent this year, a respectable growth but still greatly lags the pace in the region. The East Asian region, as a whole, was forecast to post its fifth consecutive year of strong growth this year, backed up by a substantial decline in poverty. It is seen growing by about 8 percent, the second strongest pace in the five-year long economic expansion in the region, fueled by a 10 percent likely growth by China.

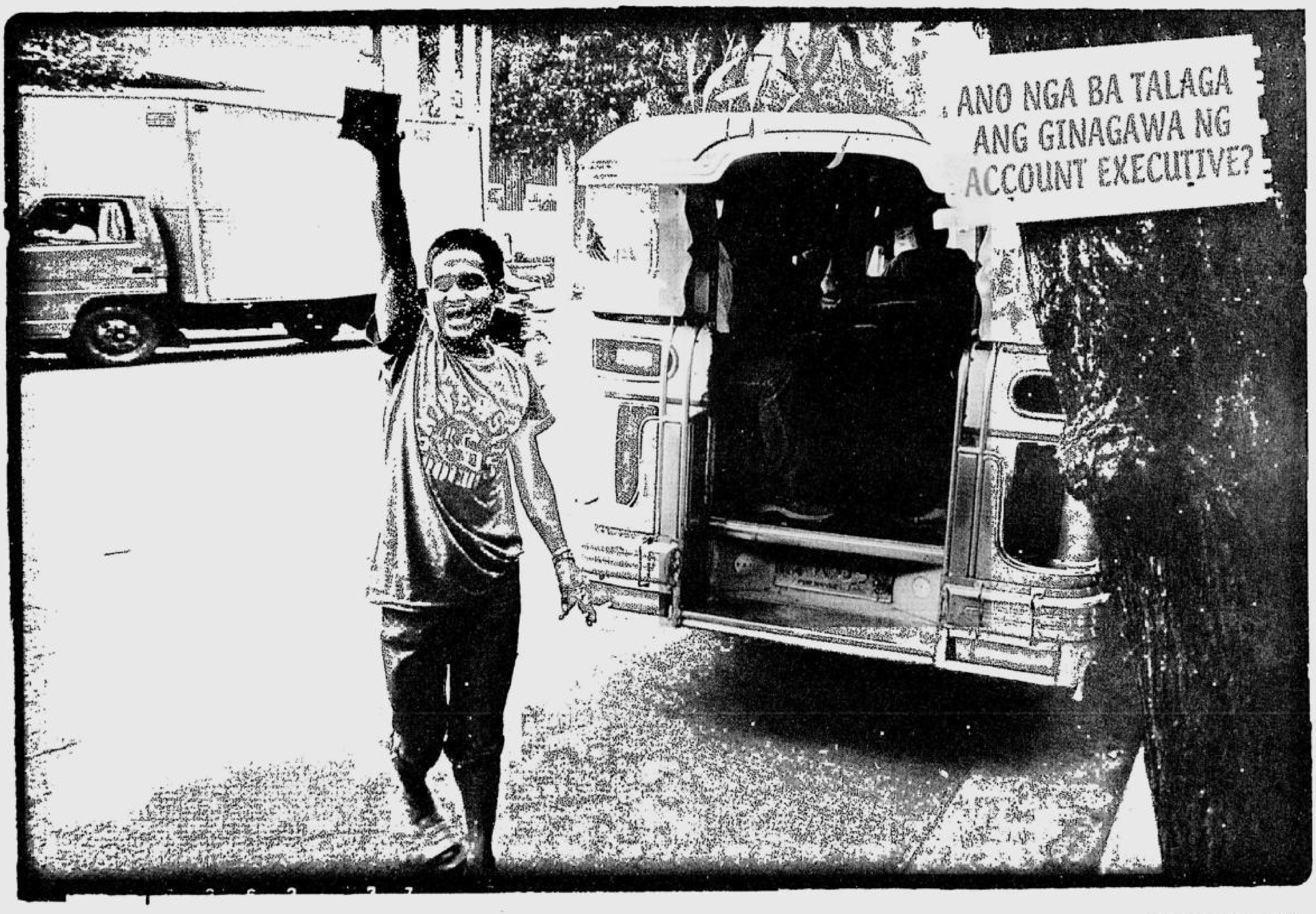

BOURGUIGNON

Opening up

Emerging East Asia comprises China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and some smaller economies—and four newly industrialized economies Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan.

Bourguignon says the country can catch up with its faster growing neighbors by maintaining a favorable investment climate, making the markets competitive and committing allocation of resources for human capital. He also cites the need to further liberalize the economy.

"Part of the way which a country can really reap the benefits of globalization is to be as efficient as possible, to make sure that there is no protected sector in the economy," he says.



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A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

FOR 23 YEARS NOW, SINCE 1983, I've created audio lessons on leadership. Every 10 years, when I hit a milestone age (40, 50, 60), I share my vantage point of life's journey in the hopes it will lend perspective to younger leaders as they mature and grow.

I recently celebrated my 60th birthday and found myself thinking about aging. It seems the older you get, the more life comes into focus. As leaders, aging allows us to separate the important from the unimportant, to appreciate more and reach for less, and to allow those who are younger to step up to the plate and learn their lessons.

In this week's column, you'll find a summary of my thoughts after turning 40 and 50, but I'd like to focus upon my reflections after reaching 60 years of age.

I'm 60 & compounding

Turning sixty, I look at my life and realize that I'm slowing down. I don't have the energy I once had, and I simply can't do as much as I once could. However, I also find that I'm entering a "compounding stage" in my life. I'm profiting from the investments I made when I was younger, and I'm watching them earn interest and steadily grow in value. I'm reaping the benefits of decisions which I made early in life and continue to manage to this day.

What is compounding in my life?

1. Relationships

Through the years, I've tried to see the best side of people. Looking closely, we can see flaws and defects in every person, but our relationships have a richer quality when we search for strength and beauty in the lives around us. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Every man is entitled to be valued by his best moments."

I've sought to relate on a heart to heart level with those around me. The dreams and passions stored within hearts are powerful keys which can unlock a wealth of potential. To understand the mind of a person look at what he has already achieved, but to understand the heart of a person look at what he aspires yet to do.

Over the course of my life I've built bridges with those around me. I've stayed connected with others, linked my friends with helpful contacts from my network, and refused to allow conflicts to sabotage my friendships. According to Joseph F. Newton, "People are lonely because they build walls instead of bridges." Opening ourselves to others yields a satisfaction that's missed when we surround ourselves with defenses.

I've consistently strived to give more than I receive. Keeping score is for games, not friendships. Avoid feeling entitled when you give, and don't be too proud to accept when another person acts generously toward you.

I've tried to live for others. One is a little number, and when we live only for ourselves we lead small and shallow lives. Selfishness is a destructive disease with unpleasant symptoms. I agree with Helen Keller: "Life is an exciting business and most exciting when lived for others."

2. Influence

Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.

According to Jim Collins, the total number of philosophers who are significant in world history is approximately 135 to 500 persons; the smaller number if we take only the major figures in each world civilization; the larger one if we add secondary figures. Even if we add the minor figures in all of the networks, in all of the civilizations, the total is 2,700. In sum, between 150 and 3,000 people (a tiny fraction of the roughly 23 billion people living between 600 BC and 1900 AD) framed the major contours of world civilization. Clearly, the transformations here were top-down.

My focus has been to influence the influencers in the main areas of influence: Religion, economics, government, family, media, education, sports. In my early years as a pastor, I had significant influence within church circles, but little elsewhere. As I've grown as a leader, I've learned to branch out and add value in additional areas.

3. Time

At 60, life begins to resemble a roll of toilet paper—the closer you get to the end, the faster it goes.

At 51, a heart attack helped me to understand the precious value of the time. Lying in the hospital, I remember thinking I had so much more to do, so much I wanted to give, but I didn't know how much time I had remaining. Today matters more than we'll ever know. Each second is a gift, and every day a treasured opportunity.

4. Perspective

As you get older, time speeds up but life slows down. The best way I know to explain this concept is through a sports analogy. In football, the decisions of the quarterback determine the effectiveness of the offense. When a college quarterbacks transition to the pros, they often go through a rough stretch, as they adjust to the faster pace of play. However, after a few years of experience, the game "slows down" for the quarterback as he is able to speed up his decision-making. Aging is similar. Even though everything around you appears to pick up speed, you can process experiences and prioritize what's important more easily than ever before.

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Dollar denominated . . .

From page B2-4

ic; it changes from time to time depending on the prevailing circumstances in the foreign exchange market.

To address this situation, the SEC imposed a condition on its approval of the corporation's plan: the total value of the dollar denominated preferred stocks to be issued shall not exceed the authorized capital stock of the company in the event of an exchange rate fluctuation.

In the light of this ruling, this writer believes a corporation can be organized and registered using a combination of currencies as consideration for its stocks.

And if it does, the accountant of that corporation will have to contend with the special rules that the SEC has promulgated for business entities that use currencies other than the peso in its operations.

Feedback rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph

What firms need from business . . .

From page B2-2

real industrial settings. The schools partner with corporations to make this happen. There is, in fact, more collaboration now between universities and corporations to adopt this approach for management education. Some corporate universities run their own training sessions and ask their employees to apply their learnings in their own workplace.

Other corporate universities engage the services of MBA schools for customized programs. Management consulting companies have set up their own versions of the MBA to compete directly with the academe and sell their unique offerings to their corporate clients.

In AIM, the most action-oriented program is the Master in Entrepreneurship (ME) course. Only entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs are allowed to attend the course. Their businesses become their ready-built laboratories for immediate application of their learnings, which happen only four to six days a month after the first month of foundation courses. There is an "Action Consultancy" subject in the MBA program but AIM's partner corporations usually assign consultancy-type project studies to the students, rather than the implementation of work programs which involve their own corporate personnel. Doing skills are not emphasized.

For developing people skills, even the vaunted case method of MBA schools miss the mark. People skills are best learned while "doing with people" but there must be a strong mentoring component to the program. Also, there is a need to bring in other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history the humanities and, even arts, culture and spirituality into the management education arena. Only the best of teachers can pull this off because the "liberal arts" may be too difficult to contain in a limited number of subjects and sessions. Great people skills presuppose that the manager must have a high level of self mastery and self management before he or she can begin to learn how to manage other people. But this requires a good amount of introspection and intrapersonal intelligence, which the case method fails to foster.

Basically then, people skills go beyond studying the usual cases on human behavior in organizations in business schools. These cases merely scratch the barest of human surfaces. More discernment and wisdom are required. New materials that encourage a lot of personal reflection would definitely be superior to cases.

For developing creativity, intuition and innovativeness, group exercises, workshops, field trials and tests, meditation and mind streaming, brainstorming, metaphoring, reconfiguration techniques, doodling and "noodling," thought experiments, games, serendipity walks, dreaming and daydreaming and total project immersion are more effective and far superior methods. Schools and teachers (who are more logical left brainers rather than creative and intuitive right brainers) should invest in developing new learning materials and approaches. Their traditional teaching arsenal are woefully ancient.

Developing the entrepreneurial spirit and embracing an wholistic way of thinking (with strong emphasis on integrating the various aspects of ones's life into the workplace) are the hardest to teach because they focus on the character, attitude and will of the manager. Self mastery is key to this endeavor. And a lot more mentoring. Greater exposure to the world of entrepreneurs and more interaction with them will help in the process of entrepreneurial osmosis. In the MBA major in Entrepreneurship program of AIM, students are required to conceptualize, design, develop, launch and commercialize products within the time frame of their course. They must actually engage in the production, marketing and financing of their products, and in the managing of people, meaning their own staff, their customers and their suppliers. This also teaches them to look at the various aspects of their enterprise as a whole. When MBA students team up in these entrepreneurial ventures, they learn the hardest lesson of all—mutual respect and understanding in the midst of conflict-ridden situations.

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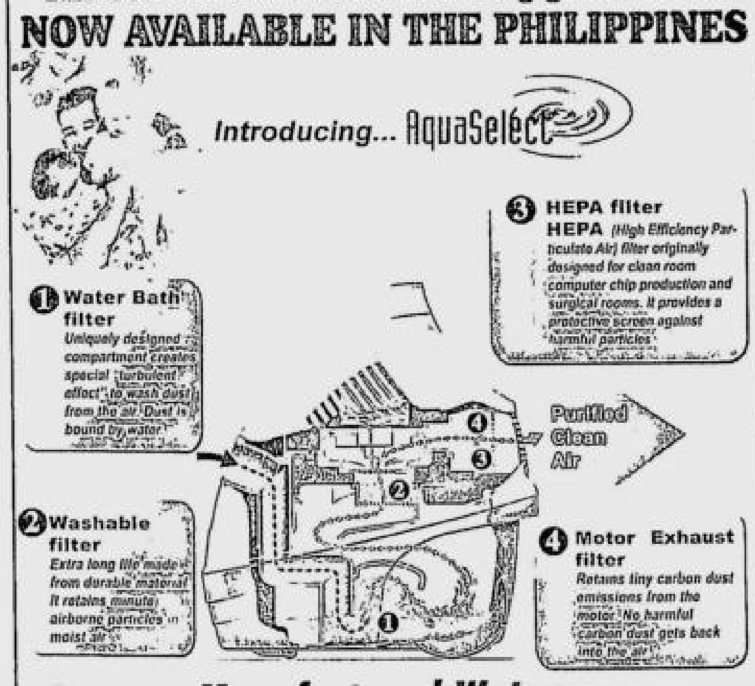
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Pilipinas Anti-Piracy Team Seized P50M Worth of Pirated Software in 2006 Raids

Manila, Philippines The Pilipinas Anti-Piracy Team (PAPT), composed of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Optical Media Board (OMB) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), has conducted numerous successful raids across the country last year against establishments using or selling pirated software, resulting in the confiscation of 50 million pesos worth of illegal software.

Speaking on behalf of the PAPT, Police Senior Superintendent Noel delos Reyes, head of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group's Anti-Fraud and Commercial Crimes Division (AFCCD) of the PNP said: "The raids being conducted by the PAPT are not limited within the Metro Manila area. Its nationwide crackdown against violators of laws on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the form of software piracy underlines the team's determination to go after business establishments using or selling pirated software."

"Officers of companies that continue to disregard software licensing regulations open themselves to risks of prosecution and conviction," he added. Under the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines, the use of unlicensed software in the workplace is subject to penalties of up to nine years imprisonment and a fine of up to P1.5 million.

Companies raided by the PAPT for alleged use of unlicensed software in their business operations include Belle Corporation in Pasig City, Decision Support Systems, Inc in Mandaluyong City, Drugcheck Philippines, Inc. in Pasig City, Hazama Corporation (Philippine Branch Office) in Clark Airbase, Pampanga and Prime Pacific Grill Corporation in Quezon City.

Business establishments involved in the alleged reproduction and sale of pirated software were also raided. These included Delgic Play Station Center in Lucena City, two branches of Electrocomputer Data System (EDS) in Tacloban City; FastWin Trading Inc. / FastWin Computer Enterprises in Mandaue City; two outlets of Filbar's in Glorietta 2 and Greenbelt 1 in Makati City; Genex Mediatech and Pro-Con Computer Center in AliMall in Cubao, Quezon City; Maxsaver Trading and Byte Circuits Computer Services in Cebu City; Octagon Computer Store and Rushwell Computer Surplus Center in Iloilo City; Power Station Computer Services in Olongapo City and Santol Paguia Computer World Plus and Sky Jersey in Bataan.

More information on the raids conducted by the Pilipinas Anti-Piracy Team is available at the PAPT website, www.papt.org.ph. The website also receives reports on entities that use pirated and unlicensed software.

Advt'l.

Dollar denominated stocks

Corporate Securities Info

Raul Palabrica

IF YOU WANT TO SUBSCRIBE to shares of stocks of domestic corporations, you should pay in Philippine pesos otherwise your subscription will be disallowed.

Right? Wrong!

Many (and this includes lawyers) are under the impression that only pesos can be used to pay for shares of stocks.

This perception is not surprising because for a long time there was a law—Republic Act 529, or the Uniform Currency Act—that required all obligations entered into in the Philippines to be in the local currency.

If another currency is used, the payment obligation has to be discharged in pesos using the prevailing rate of exchange at the time of the payment.

The law exempted from its coverage transactions that involved loans or investments by foreign governments, high priority economic projects of the government using foreign funds, and foreign exchange transactions of banks.

At the time of its enactment in 1950, the law made sense. The country was just recovering from World War II.

Our lawmakers then believed that the use of other currencies may undermine the stability of the peso and, in the process, adversely affect business and trade in the country.

Amendment

The restriction made life difficult for Filipino businessmen who did business with foreign companies that demanded payment in US dollars or other foreign currency.

So what did the clever businessmen do at that time? They simply signed the contracts outside of the Philippines to avoid the coverage of the law.

In 1996, four and a half decades later, our legislators accepted the realities of a global economy and repealed that law.

The new law—Rep. Act 8183—provides that "all monetary obligations shall be settled in the Philippine currency which is legal tender in the Philippines"

At the same time, however, the law gives the contracting parties the right to agree that the obligation or transaction be settled in any other currency at the time of payment.

The coverage of RA 8183 was the subject of a query to the Securities and Exchange by a corporation that wanted to issue US dollar denominated preferred shares of stock to shore up its financial position.

The company wanted to make sure subscription to stocks is included in the term "monetary obligations."

At the center of the issue is Section 14 of the Corporation Code which requires stock subscriptions to be "in lawful money of the Philippines," and that the paid-up capital of corporations should not be "less than P5,000."

Consideration

The SEC ruled there is no legal impediment to the corporation's plan to issue shares payable in US dollars.

It said that while shares to be issued have to be expressed in Philippine pesos, the applicable provisions of law are "mere formal rules" and that exemptions from the rules are allowed when "prescribed by the Corporation Code and special laws."

With the repeal of the Uniform Currency Act, the SEC stated that the "public policy requiring all obligations—including shares of stock which are obligations of the corporation—to be settled in legal currency of the Philippines has been relaxed."

The SEC was aware that the value of a foreign currency vis-à-vis the Philippine peso is not stat-

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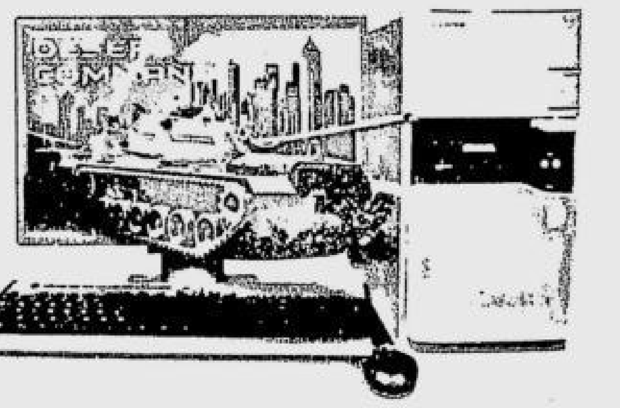

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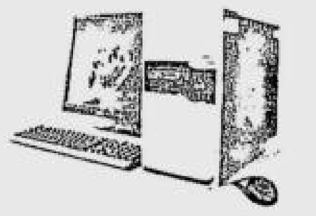

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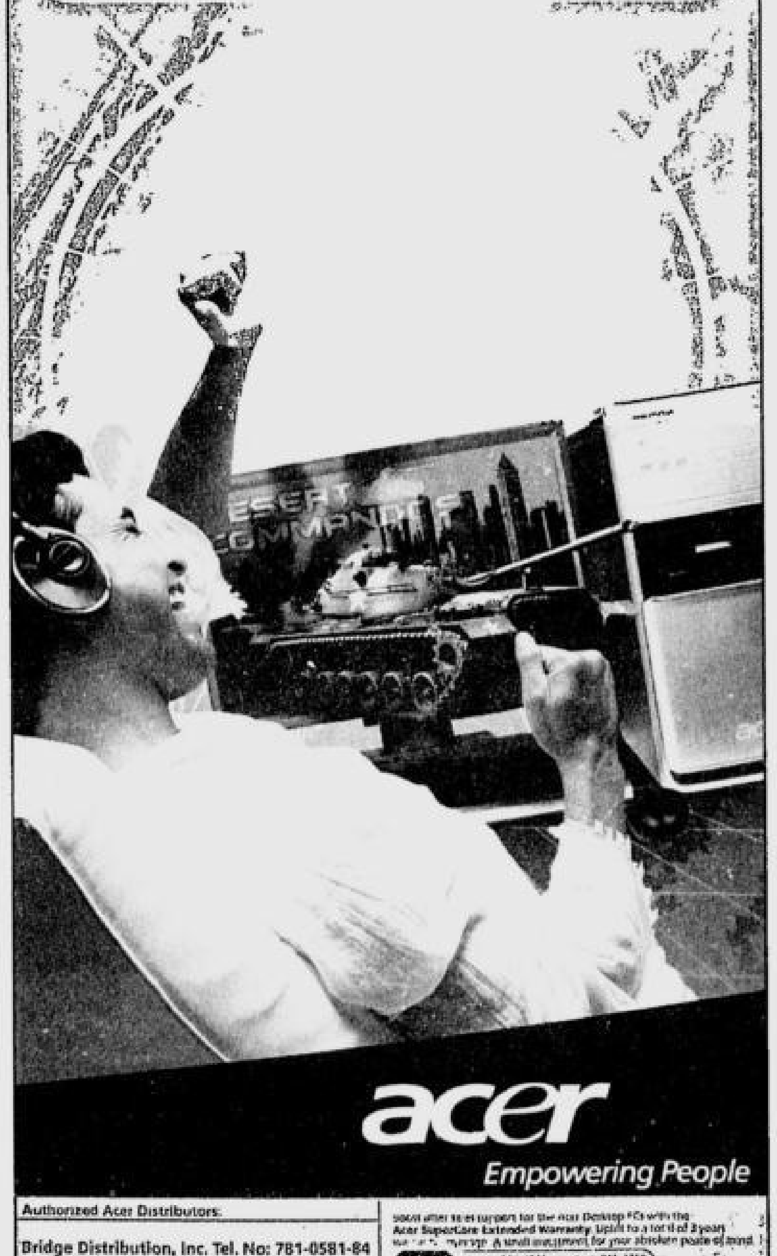

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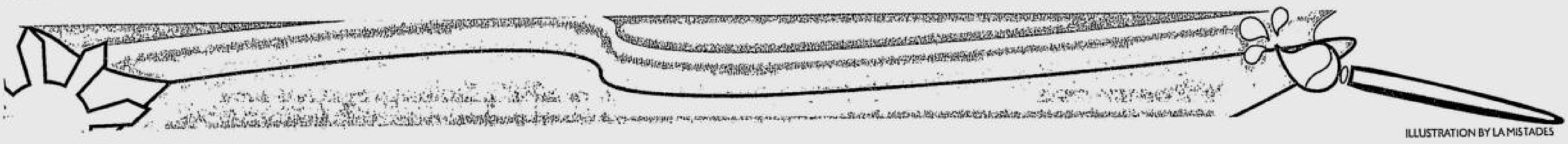

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NATIONAL ARTS MONTH

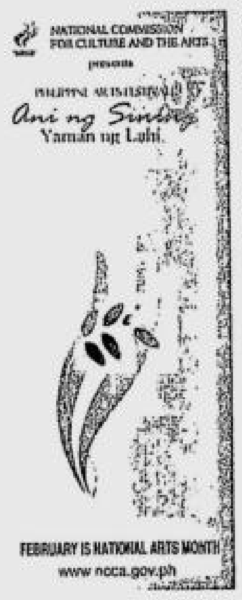
Month of love and art cometh

The Philippine Arts Festival opens Feb. 1 simultaneously in Malolos, Bulacan; Cebu City, Cagayan de Oro City, and at the CCP in Metro Manila

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE SEVEN LIVELY ARTS—music, literature, theater, dance, visual art, architecture and cinema—will bloom again this February, month of love and art, in the Philippine Arts Festival 2007, which is spearheaded by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

The theme is "Ani ng Sining: Yaman ng Lahi" (A Harvest of Art, Wealth of the Nation). Festival spokespersons are songwriter Noel Cabangon and singer Faith Cuneta, who rendered some songs during the recent press conference announcing the events at the NCCA in Intramuros, Manila.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NCCA executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez spoke of the arts as being "a catalyst for social transformation."

The impression one gets is that of the arts stepping down from their high pedestal and reaching out to various publics around the country.

Commissioner for the arts Felipe M. de Leon Jr. declared that "the arts provide the most lucid mirror of what we are as a people. We need more markers of national identity, as packaged through the arts."

He called for artistic packaging: "Art is the best when it comes to packaging, artistic presentation. When packaged in an art form, this is the best way of calling attention to an issue, or to a country."

De Leon added: "The arts reflect our life, an affirmation of our... identity, a marker of prestige, a venue for social criticism, and even therapy, as in music. We are among the most talented in the world in these areas."

Flagship projects

Each committee on the arts has its flagship project. The Committee on Dance will have a touring dance concert which hopes to go to Zamboanga City, Baguio City, Bulacan, Quezon City Memorial Circle and Luneta, Manila. The Committee on Music will launch a choral-writing competition.

The Committee on Dramatic Arts will hold the First National Universities Theater Festival at the University of San Agustin, Iloilo City.

The Committee on Literary Arts will mount tributes, through performances of their works, to the National Artists for Literature: Bienvenido Lumbera (Lipa, Batangas; Feb. 5), Edith Tiempo (Cebu City, Feb. 10), Alejandro Roces (Iligan City, Feb. 17), F. Sionil José (Pangasinan, Feb. 24), and Virgilio Almario (Angeles City, Feb. 24).

The Committee on Visual Arts will hold the annual digital art competition (WebSining), while the Committee on Architecture will showcase an exhibit of architectural landmarks spanning the 20th century at the National Museum. And the Committee on Cinema will hold the film festival, Cinema Paraiso 4.

So there will be forums, workshops, exhibits, performances, parades and what have you on the three main islands of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The 2nd International Rondalla Festival will be held in Dumaguete City.

The festival opens Feb. 1 simultaneously in Malolos, Bulacan; Cebu City, Cagayan de Oro

MONTH/ C2

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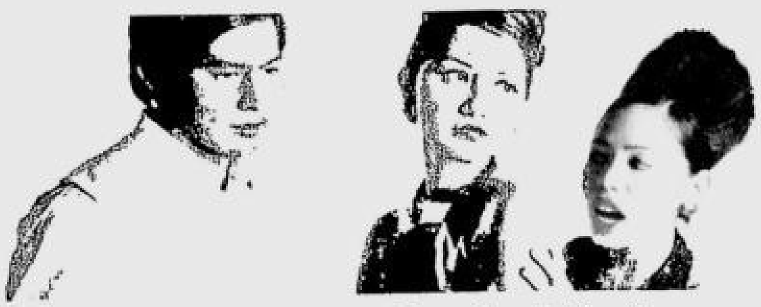
Tanghalang Pilipino presents F. Sionil Jose's 'The Pretenders'



TONY Samson (Romnick Sarmenta) learns from Bettina (Anna Deroca, right) that he sired a son with Emy (Airem Cacdac).

TO CLOSE ITS 20TH THEATER SEASON AND in celebration of the 2007 National Arts Month, Tanghalang Pilipino stages the world premiere of the adaptation of National Artist and Ramon Magsaysay awardee F. Sionil Jose's first novel, "Ang Mga Huwad" (The Pretenders).

This masterpiece of Southeast Asian literature offers a glimpse of the lavish world of high-society '50s Manila.

"Ang Mga Huwad" tells of an intellectual who rises from his peasant beginnings, obtains a doctorate from Harvard, marries into a rich family, and belatedly realizes that behind the pristine luxury of glitz and glamour awaits the seductive monster of greed.

Publishers Weekly says "this dark panoramic vision of the Philippines powerfully drives its message home: A society intent only on calculating a man's price is one that ultimately devalues all men."

The play runs Feb. 2-25 at Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino (CCP Little Theater). The cast includes Romnick Sarmenta, Kalila Aguilos, Chicqui Xerez-Burgos, Peewee O'Hara, Dido de la Paz, Roeder Camañag, Paolo O'Hara, Wenah Nagales and Bong Cabrera, under Chris Millado's direction.

Adaptation is by Rody Vera; set design by Tuxqs Rutaquio; costume design by Kalila Aguilos; lights by Jon-jon Villareal; sound design by Jethro Joaquin; choreography by Edna Vida-Froilan; and technical direction by Dennis Marasigan.

Call 8323661, 8321125 locals 1620/1621, 0920-9535381 or 0920-9535419.

A tribute to Mother Edith

By Ian Rosales Casocot
Contributor

THERE IS A REASON why many writers in the Philippines, from a certain generation and onward, have taken to calling one woman "Mom," and meaning it with all the affections of a child for a mother.

Some, perhaps, now take to her as a grandmother, but still we all call her "Mom"—always in that intimate vein, always in the context of family. No one else in the small Philippine literary world can lay claim to that singular distinction.

That familial term of endearment is first a testament to National Artist Edith Lopez Tiempo being the maternal vanguard of Philippine literature and creative writing. She is one of the last remaining great ones, after the passing of such literary giants as José Garcia Villa, Bienvenido N. Santos, Edilberto K. Tiempo, Nick Joaquin, Francisco Arcellana, NVM Gonzalez, and Wilfrido Nolledo in recent years.

But the second testament springs from the magical way with which she has touched, and still continues to touch, any young writer's heart: always nurturing and generous to her "students" of writing—the way any good mother should be—and yet demanding from each one a striving for perfection in the literary craft, a discipline to be honed, a sensibility to be nurtured.

Edna Zapanta Manlapaz has once called her "a writer of substance," and "unquestionably the compleat writer." Her legacy and influence spring from a career that has spanned nearly 70 years.

"Long before feminists reviewed the canon of Philippine literature," Manlapaz writes, "lamenting the relative absence of works by women, Tiempo's works in the various genres already held pride of place in it."

Quite a feat for somebody born in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, in 1919—and who eventually chose to live with her husband Edilberto in sleepy Dumaguete down in Negros Oriental in 1940, before the war broke out in the Pacific.

EDITH Tiempo with late husband Edilberto

Former actress

"I could have remained an actress, if it were not for some strange circumstances," Tiempo told me during one of our small talks in the CAP Building where she works and keeps office for most of weekday mornings.

By the age of 18, she had already appeared as a female lead in some movies. "Instead," she added, "I chose to come here, to Dumaguete."

She was a teacher of English and literature in Silliman University, and it was in Dumaguete that she has produced much of her oeuvre, after her studies with the poet Paul Engle in the Iowa International Writers Workshop, where she also studied under Robert Penn Warren and Robert Frost.

When the American critic Leonard Casper came out with the landmark anthology "Six Filipino Poets" in 1954, Tiempo was the only woman represented in the small bunch of literary men. She has published countless stories and poems, many of them collected in "Abide, Joshua and Other Stories" (1964; "The Tracks of Babylon" (1966); "The Charmer's Box and Beyond, Extensions" (1993); and "Marginal Annotations" (2001).

She has also written five novels: "A Blade of Fern" and "His Native Coast," both in 1979; "The Alien Corn" (1991); "One, Tilting Leaves" (1995); and "The Builder" (2003).

These, plus her essays and commentaries (which helped lay the groundwork for literary criticism in the Philippines), have been published in countless publications here and abroad.

Three women

She continues to be prolific. The last time we met, we were talking about collecting her early stories, even her children's fiction, for suitable publication.

Then there's the personal anthology of the three Tiempo women currently in the burner, involving daughter Rowena Torrevillas and granddaughter Rima.

At 87, she shows no sign of slowing down, still the doyen of Montemar, her residence in Sibulan town, which is exactly as its name implies—a house on a cliff, overlooking a marriage of sea and mountain.

The anchor of her literary influence is in the summer writers' workshop she helped set up in 1962, now the oldest creative writing workshop in Asia. Its model of literary dissection, appreciation and apprenticeship is widely emulated. Dumaguete, though, writes the poet Krip Yuson, still remains "the mother of them all."

Every summer since then, the Philippine literary world knocks on her doors. The quiet appeal of Dumaguete has since made its way prominently into the pages of books, journals and literary magazines, immortalized in countless stories, poems and essays.

The authors we've read, and often praised and emulated, have made sonnets to the sunrise off the famous Boulevard, have seen Tiempo at work, and have ended up calling her Mom for the rest of their literary life.

For her, there are poems for every acacia tree that grows toward the horizon, to Tañon Strait.

Lifetime honor

She will be honored for her lifetime of words, creativity and nurturance of several generations of Filipino writers in a tribute slated on Feb. 2, at the Claire Isabel McGill Luce Auditorium in Silliman University, Dumaguete City.

The program will feature testimonials for the National Artist from various Filipino writers—including Ernesto Superal Yee, Myrna Peña-Reyes, Bobby Flores Villasis, Ian Rosales Casocot, Andrea Gomez-Soluta, and Vim Nadera Jr.—and will also include several dances inspired by the writings of Tiempo, choreographed by Ronnie Mirabuena of the Kahayag Dance Troupe.

The event, one of the highlights of the National Arts Month, is in cosponsorship with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts; the Likhaan: The University of the Philippines Creative Writing Institute; and the Department of English and Literature of Silliman University.

Over a Cup of Ginger Tea
Conversations on the Literary Narratives of Filipino Women
Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo

New collection of literary essays

THE TITLE OF THE BOOK READS LIKE an invitation, and this is precisely what writer Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo intends with her latest work on literature, "Over a Cup of Ginger Tea: Conversations on the Literary Narratives of Filipino Women." Hidalgo describes what she wishes to do as to "start a conversation with the reader… much as I try to do with my students when I teach literature. I try to interest them in stories which for different reasons have fascinated me all these years."

Published by the University of the Philippines Press, "Over a Cup of Ginger Tea" is a collection of what the writer calls "literary essays" in that they are "about literature and… written in a style which will make the reading of them as pleasant an experience for the readers as is the reading of other types of literature."

The essays range over the narratives of several generations of women writers, from Maria Paz Mendoza and Edith Tiempo to F.H. Batacan and Tara Sering; and cover conventional realist novels and short stories, as well as fairy tales, chick lit, crime fiction and war memoirs.

Hidalgo has worked as writer, editor and teacher in different countries and has received awards for both her fiction and creative nonfiction. She is a professor of creative writing and literature, and has been coordinator of UP's Creative Writing Program. A former director of the UP Creative Writing Center and director of the UP Press, she is vice president for public affairs of the UP System.

The book is available at Aeon Books on Katipunan; Popular Bookstore on T. Morato; Solidaridad, PowerBooks, National Book Store, Bound Bookshop, Fully Booked; and at the UP Press bookstores in UP Diliman, Baguio and Davao.

The production is the sixth longest-running musical on Broadway

A SCENE from the Ateneo Children's Theater production

Disney's 'Beauty and the Beast' onstage

By Fernando Hofileña
Contributor

FOR ITS 75TH ANNUAL PRODUCTION, the Ateneo Children's Theater (ACT), the oldest among the children's drama groups in the country, is staging Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" under direction of Jervy Robles.

This modern classic is the sixth longest-running musical in Broadway history. It has been performed in 15 countries and seven languages.

The play's plot is alluring and simple. The Beast is a spoiled prince transformed by an enchantress' spell, who, if he cannot learn to give and receive love, will spend his remaining years in beastly isolation. Belle, a kind, beautiful and misunderstood maiden, offers the Beast his last hope for regaining his old self.

Robles has observed the excitement of the 100-member cast. Carlo Duay, a seventh-grader at the Ateneo who has been an actor since kindergarten and impressed the audience as the Cat in the Hat in last year's "Seussical the Musical," had watched the show on Broadway and its local version in Meralco and found it "colorful and alive."

Meanwhile, Stephanie Dos Santos, a sixth-grade pupil at Miriam who has had stints in Repertory Philippines and Trumpets, loves the songs and enjoys playing Belle despite the difficulty of memorizing long lines.

Romar Chuca, another ACT mainstay who essays Gaston, evinces maturity at the threshold of adolescence and declares: "The play is both exciting and challenging."

Newcomer William Ocier, a seventh-grader and an alternate of Chuca, says: "It's a dream play. You can't imagine what will happen next." Like Chuca and Duay, he marvels at the gorgeous costumes.

ACT has premiered well-loved Broadway musicals such as "Peter Pan," "Aladdin," "Oliver" and "Lord of the Rings."

In the '70s, as Filipinization swept across the country, it acquired the sobriquet "Theater of, by and for Filipino children." Through the years, it has served as á vehicle for personality development and values education.

"Beauty and the Beast" will have its last two shows at Irwin Theater, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, QC, on Feb. 2-3 at 6 p.m. Call 4266001 locals 7238 to 7240.

Literary convention

POWERBOOKS SPECIALTY STORE AND THE Read or Die organization will hold the Read or Die Philippine Literary Convention (RodCon) on Feb. 3-4, at Hotel InterContinental in Makati City.

RodCon 2007 is a two-day literary convention organized by Read Or Die in partnership with PowerBooks. The convention seeks to bring together readers, writers, publishers, government, school organizations and book dealers to highlight the importance of reading and literacy in building an open world for every Filipino through books.

Participants will get the opportunity to watch movies, join contests, buy books, win freebies, attend discussions and vote for the Pinoy Reader's Choice Awards. Top bands such as Radioactive Sago Project, Up Dharma Down, Paramita, and other musicians of Terno Records will perform.

Pre-registration rates (until Jan. 31): P300 (two days); P150 (single-day entry) for professionals and P200 (two days); P100 (single-day entry) for students. Fees are waived for guests and volunteers.

Registration rates after the Jan. 31 deadline: P500 (two days); P300 (single-day entry) for professionals and P300 (two days); P200 (single-day entry) for students.

Visit www.read-or-die.org/rodcon.

Month of love and art cometh

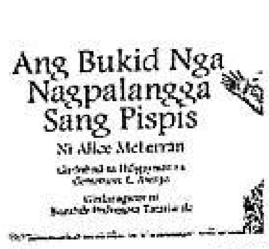
From page C1

City, and at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Metro Manila.

The good news for the regions is that there will be festival grants (P100,000 each) to stimulate artistic activity in 28 provinces. "Next year," De Leon announced, "another 28 provinces will be given festival grants, until the whole country is covered."

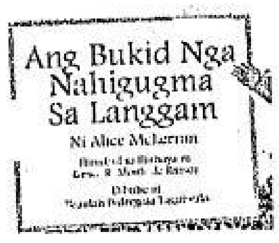
For schedule of activities nationwide of the Philippine Arts Festival, call 5272192 loc. 512, e-mail info@ncca.gov.ph, or visit www.ncca.gov.ph

BRENDA V. Fajardo, festival director; professor Felipe de Leon Jr., commissioner for the arts; Emily V. Tiongco, NCAA deputy executive director; singers Noel Cabangonand Faith Cuneta; and Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, NCAA executive director

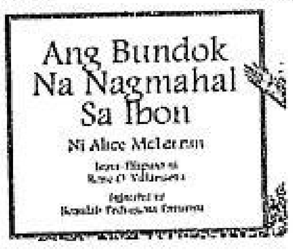


Ang Bukid Nga Nagpalangga Sang Pispis
Ni Alice McLerran

Ti Bantay A Nagayat Iti Maysa A Billit
Ni Alice McLerran



Ang Bukid Nga Nahigugma Sa Langgam
Ni Alice McLerran



Ang Bundok Na Nagmahal Sa Ibon
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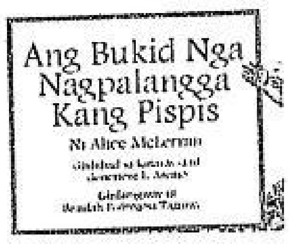


Ang Bukid Nga Nagpalangga Kang Pispis
Ni Alice McLerran

By Neni Sta. Romana Cruz
Contributor

WHO CAN MATCH THIS initial venture of Mother Tongue Publishing Inc., the new kid on the publishing block, with its quiet but impressive first release of six books recently?

"The Mountain that Loved A Bird" by Alice McLerran and illustrated by Beaulah Pedregosa Taguiwalo is an extraordinary book in many ways.

Those of us who have been associated with Taguiwalo in Ang Ilustrador ng Kabataan and the Philippine Board on Books for Young People are not surprised that the art work and book layout are stunning. The book is in softcover, in full color on thick bookpaper, and is clutter-free.

Pardon my unrestrained enthusiasm and yes, undisguised bias, but the book truly looks and feels like a legitimate children's book.

The story behind the publication of the books deserves retelling.

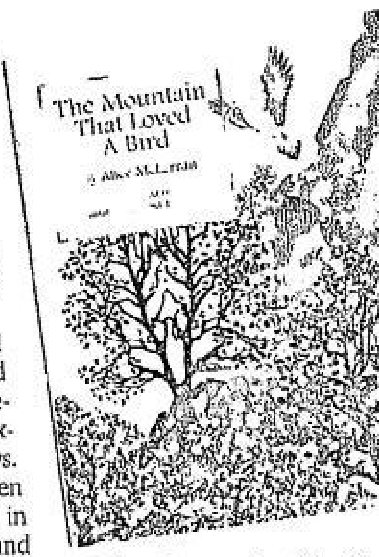
Superwoman Taguiwalo, who wears yet another hat as regional advisor of the international organization, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, met McLerran at an SCBWI conference one winter in New York.

A close friendship developed between them and they started to dream of doing a Philippine edition of McLerran's first picture book. (The book has been translated in Japanese, Finnish, Spanish, German and French. Originally illustrated by Eric Carle, the book has also been illustrated by local artists in Pakistan, India, Russia, Lebanon and Turkey).

And now, we do not only have a Philippine edition in English with illustrations by a Filipino artist, but editions as well in Filipino ("Ang Bundok ng Nagmamahal sa Ibon" by Rene O. Villanueva), Iloko ("Ti Bantay A Nagayat Ti Maysa A Billit" by Herminio S. Beltran Jr.), Hiligaynon ("Ang Bukid Nga Nagpalangga Sang Pispis" by Genevieve L. Asenjo), Kinaray-a ("Ang Bukid Nga Nagpalangga Sang Pispis" by Genevieve L. Asenjo), and Binisaya/Cebuano ("Ang Bukid Nga Nahigugma Sa Langgam" by Grace Monte de Ramos).

Overwhelmed

At the launch, McLerran was overwhelmed and came close to tears as she listened to the beautiful readings by the translators in the different Filipino languages.



The Mountain That Loved A Bird

The book, appropriate for Grades 2-6 students, tells of the friendship between a mountain and a bird, Joy, who annually takes her rest on the mountain. But because the mountain has become barren and the bird needs trees on which she can build her nest, Joy has to fly elsewhere.

"Mountains last forever, birds do not," Joy says.

But the bird promises to name her daughter Joy, who in turn will make the yearly visit. Joy and the mountain seal a pact of friendship.

Touching is the part when the mountain's heart breaks on "the hundredth spring, the hundredth goodbye," and yet from this sadness a new life awakens, and the friendship takes on a different dimension.

It will be interesting how children from the different regional languages will react to the story.

Aptly named Mother Tongue, the publishing company explains that it published the story in the different languages of the Philippines because of what Newbery Medal winner Ursula K. Le Guin said: "Literature takes shape and life in the body, in the womb of the mother tongue."

Perhaps making reading materials in the original language of children would cultivate in them love for reading. Perhaps after their rearing in the original language would also facilitate their literacy in Filipino and English.

Current researches on language and learning show that facility in one's first language—the mother tongue—enhances learning significantly.

Making books available in the local languages may be ambitious, considering that there are some 170 distinct living languages spoken in our islands. But the path started by Mother Tongue should be worth pursuing.

For orders, call 8014428; mobile 0917-7874956. E-mail mothertonguepublishinginc@gmail.com.

PUBLISHER and illustrator Beaulah Pedregosa Taguiwalo

The author is a member of the Philippine Board on Books for Young People. She may be reached at nenisrc@gmail.com

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Mag for today's moms

BEGINNING ITS JANUARY-February 2007 issue, Moms&babies sports a new name: Momstoday. The change underscores the bimonthly magazine's recognition that modern-day parents face unique challenges and situations different from the past generations, said editor in chief Romelda Ascutia.

momstoday
for new moms
From first bath to first cold
Immunization from birth to teens
Is your kid ready?

The magazine has also overhauled the content and design to be more reader-friendly and to "better equip mommies with modern parenting skills fit for changing times."

"The mom of today is not the same mom she was years ago," Ascutia said. "She may have become a full-time, stay-at-home mom or gone back to work, juggling family and career. She may still be happily married or already be a single parent. Her kid is now in school, probably with a baby brother or sister.

"We offer a magazine that grows along with her family and understands her evolving lifestyle."

Momstoday will be launched at the "Mommy Power 6: Embracing New Beginnings," a whole-day event of expert parenting and family wellness talks and free health services, on Feb. 24 at Megatrade Hall 1, SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

E-mail your registration and reservation to day@asia.cmpmedica.com with "Attendance Confirmation" as subject head. Or call 8860333 local 122 or 155.

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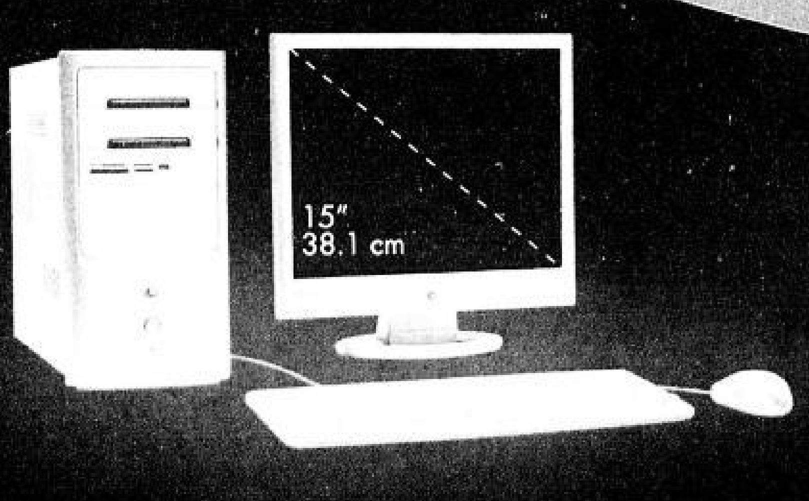

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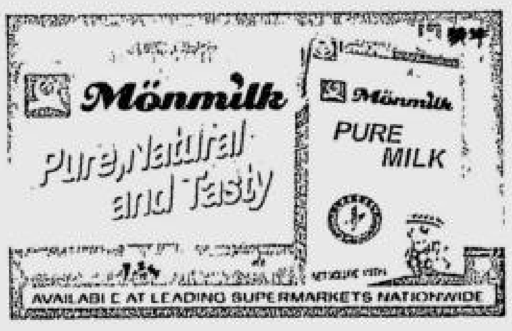
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Art at a steal

Green Papaya waives 40 percent gallery commission every weekend—it's a great time to start a collection

By James P. Ong

THREE FRIDAYS AGO, Green Papaya Art Project was supposed to launch The Night Market—a program where it sells everything at a 40-percent discount—at 6 p.m.

But hours before the door to the 7-year-old gallery, a concrete-and-glass structure in a quiet part of Quezon City still dotted with pre-martial law houses, could officially open, a buyer had already made his way in and snapped four precious works by the late artist Santiago Bose.

The sale from that, says owner Norberto Roldan, was an amount the nonprofit gallery could only make if it sold out an entire show by a much younger artist. In short, Green Papaya doesn't earn six figures every day.

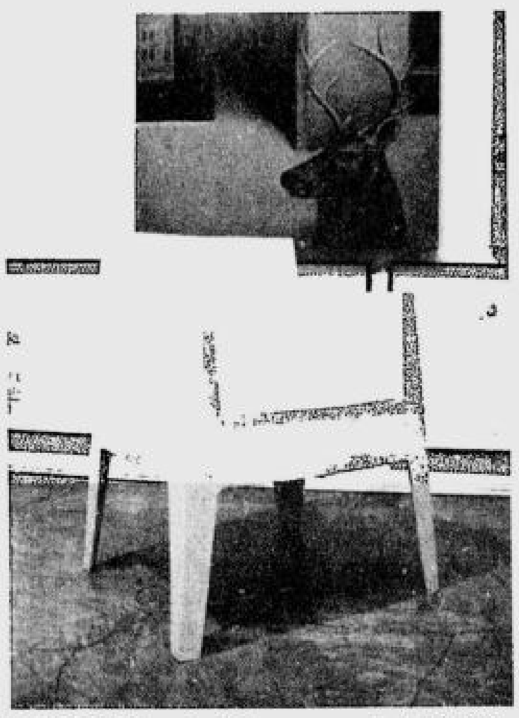
And that's why Roldan came up with The Night Market, which runs from 6 p.m. to 12 midnight every Friday and Saturday.

"It's a fundraising device for Green Papaya. But this project is also designed to help artists dispose works both from their studio inventory and those unsold from previous exhibitions," he says.

"It also makes available works considered

ART/D3

INSIDE Green Papaya. The Minni Chairs, by designer Antonio Citterio, are on sale at P6,900.



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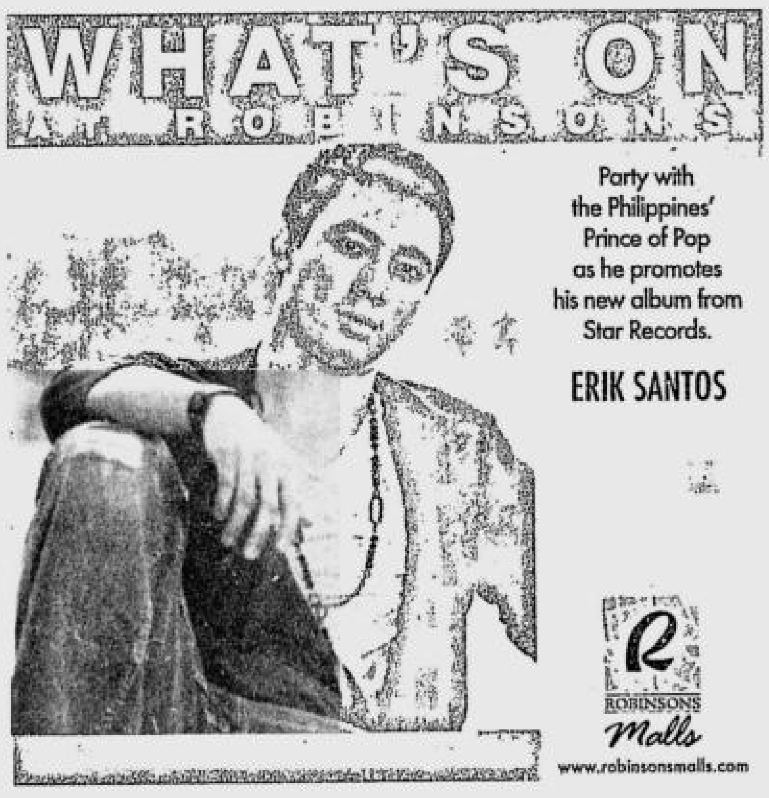
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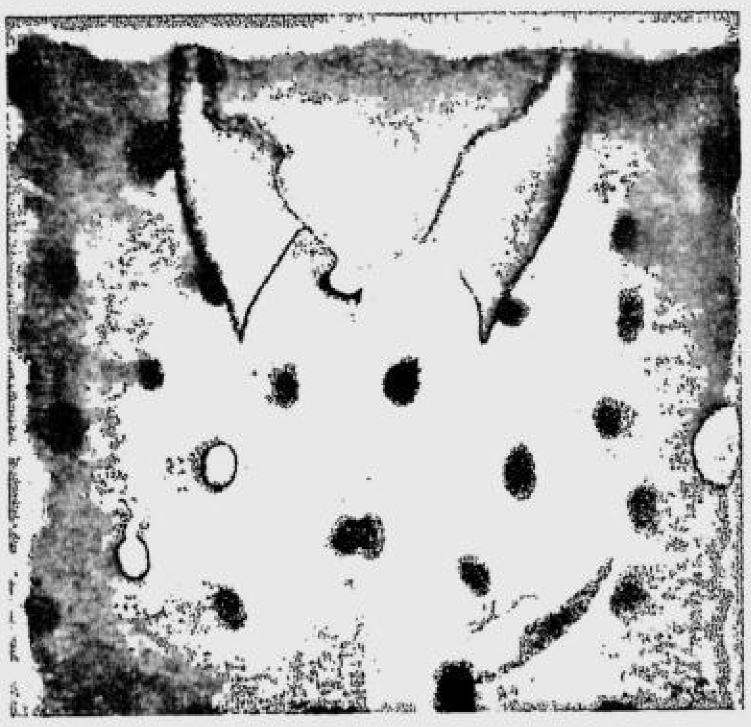


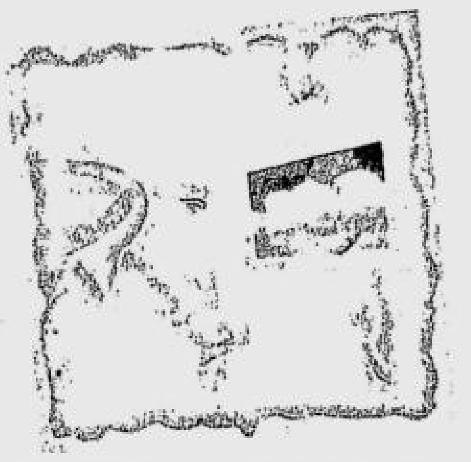
Agang Maganda's raids on the unconscious

"DREAMSCAPE" CONSISTS OF surreal depictions by Agang Maganda.

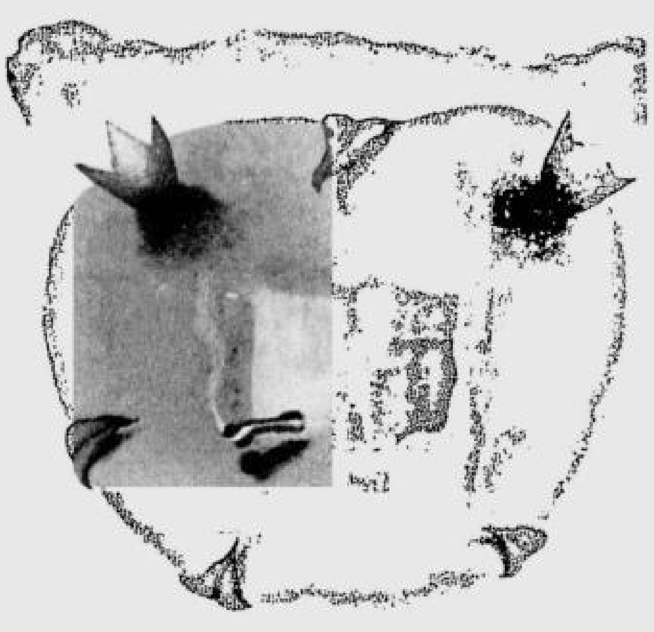
The images, says the artist, are culled from his own dreams. Leaves symbolize time while feathers represent action.

The exploration of the subconscious is parlayed in rich tones that invite viewers into a world of fantasy, taking them on a visceral visual journey.

"Dreamscape" is on view at 1/L of Gallery, Serendra, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, until Feb. 3. Call 9013152.



"MR. STILL" (above); "Mr. Swiss" (left)



"MR. AND Mrs. Red"

The democracy of art

By Constantino C. Tejero

NOTHING'S MORE democraticizing than to put works of established artists and their students in one place and see if they blend. In other words, a free-for-all.

For its second anniversary, Blueroom Art Gallery is acting up a brew with the exhibit "Art Time Together," until Jan. 30 at 1354 Gen. Lacuna St., Bangkal, Makati City.

And what goodly things there are here! It is a frothing mix of widely diverging styles, mediums and disciplines from senior and young artists, from both established and upcoming ones, very famous, almost famous and relatively obscure.

As the invite to the show's opening warns: "Prepare to see artistic conventions go up in flames with a volatile fix from the likes of Cesare and Jean Marie Syjuco, Pandy Aviado, Raul Isidro, Sid Hildawa, Alfredo Aquilizan, Lirio Salvador, Ronaldo Ruiz, Ferdinand Doctolero, Red Mansueto."

They are joined by the likes of Bobby Balingit, Raffy Ignacio, Crist Espiritu, Jethro Jocson, Lynyrd Alwyn Paras, Jesus Genotiva, Ryan Rubio, Ryan Jara, Don Dalmacio.

Such an exhibit necessarily allows for some jaggedness, as can be expected when you place a naïf by Paras side by side with a collage by Aviado; an expressionist portrait by Genotiva with a fine abstraction by Isidro; a stainless-steel sculptural piece by Salvador with an installation by Syjuco; or a textured abstraction by Mansueto with a performance by Ruiz. But here they are face to face and on equal terms.

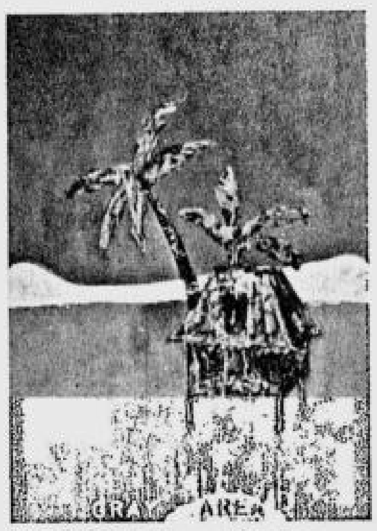
The quality of the art on display is such that even works by relative unknowns, such as "The Blue Energy B" and "The Red Portal" by Marlon Magbanua, have more dignity in composition and understanding of color theory than can be found in the highfalutin works of many a famous abstractionist.

What's more, the art space is located not even in a mall but on a street corner surrounded by thrift shops and machine shops. This makes these masterworks more accessible to the *masa*, to whom art, as many would accede, should really belong.

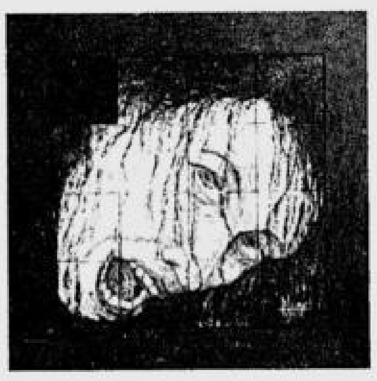
To top it all, the gallery is making a radical move to further erode the crust of elitism still clinging to art. It is offering what its curator calls an "art swap," which is unusual for any culture establishment.

An exhibition note explains the mechanics: "With a tip of the hat to its milieu of swap houses, Blueroom is offering select works in exchange for used and unwanted household items. Old paintings, furniture, stereo sets, computer, cars or anything else can be negotiated for trade with the artists' displays."

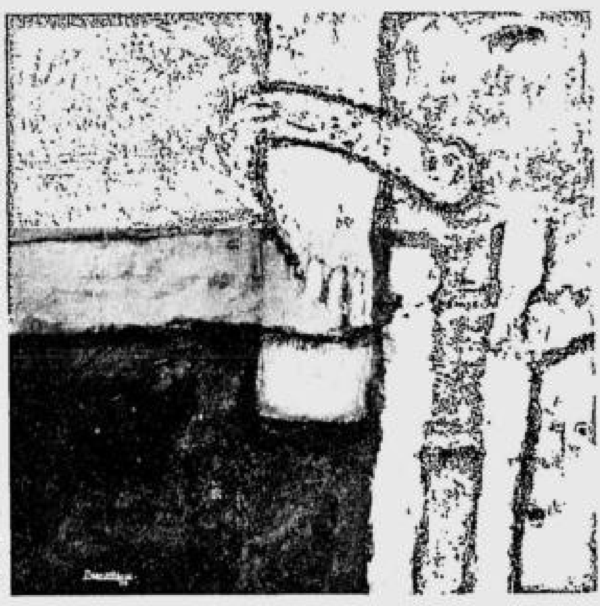
This effectively eliminates the pecuniary aspect of art. Nothing can be more *masa* than that. No art show in recent memory is as democratic.



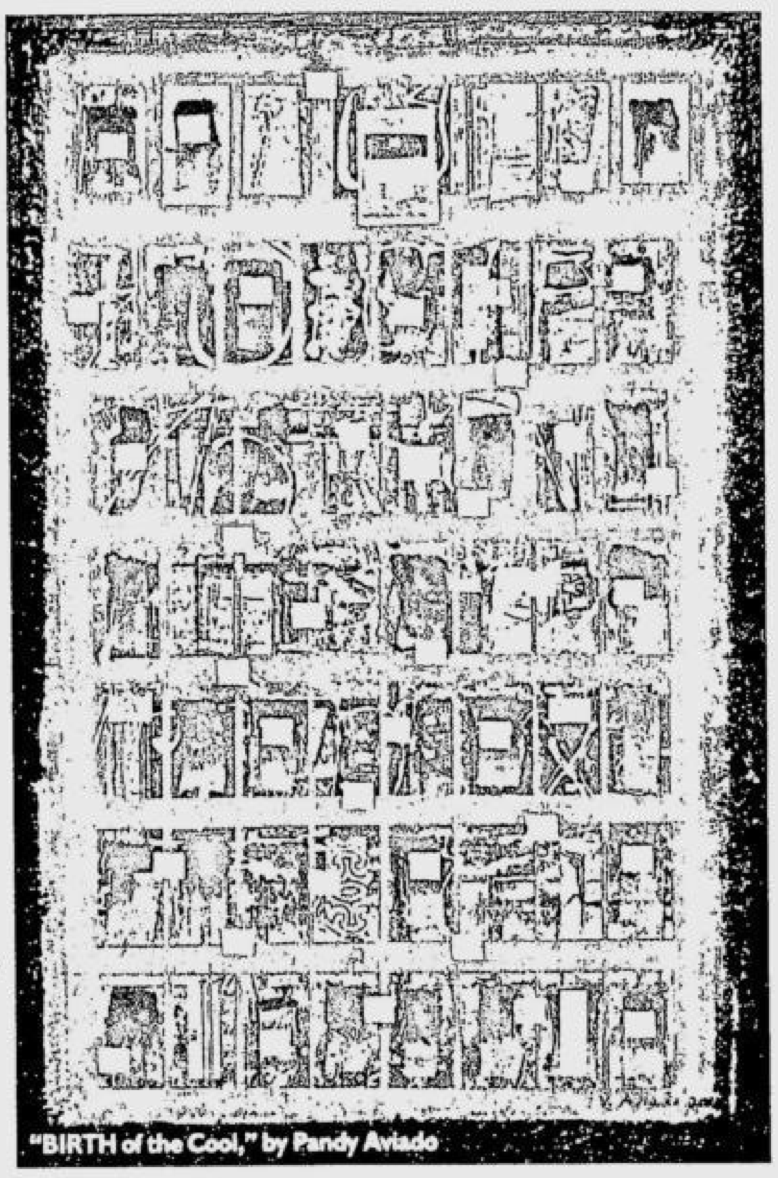
"HOME Sick Home," by Don Dalmacio



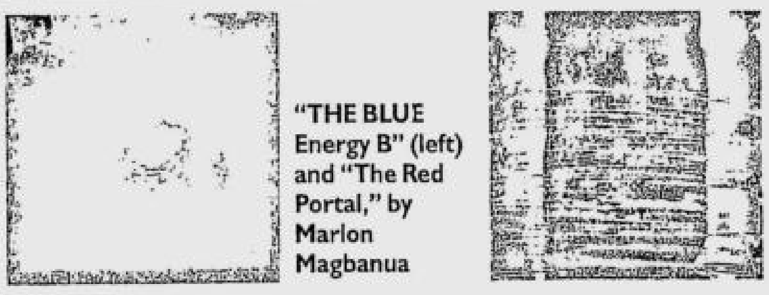
"UNTITLED," by Ryan Jara



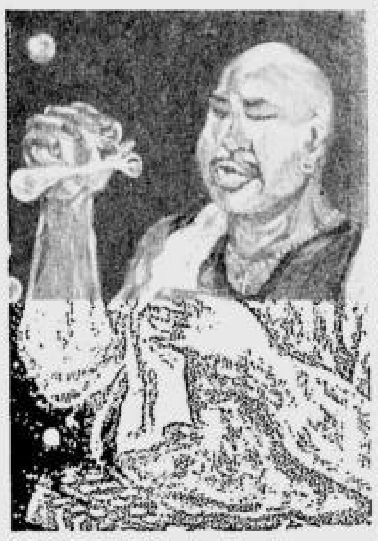
"SLANDEROUS," by Demosthenes Ocampo



"BIRTH of the Cool," by Pandy Aviado



"THE BLUE Energy B" (left) and "The Red Portal," by Marlon Magbanua



"BUBBLES Vendor," by Jesus Genotiva

"Pink Skull Tobor (Pure Quiet Noisy)," by Neil Arvin J avier

Work of art as scientific document

ONE OF THE MOST COMPLEX forms ever to be committed on canvas is that of a flower. It takes considerable skill and some bravery in the artist to paint floral forms, as one can see in the works of Cris Cruz, Isabel Diaz, Valeria Cavestany, Ricky Montilla, Mona Santos, Araceli Limcaco Dans.

Another artist who doesn't flinch from limning flowers is Joven Ignacio. As if to challenge himself, he has even chosen to specialize in rendering the most complex of them all—the orchid.

Witness "Aruga," 30 pieces in watercolor on paper, until Feb.2 at the North Court of Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City.

Though over 20 of these pieces incorporate images of Philippine birds, it is the artist's renderings of flowers that linger longer with the viewer. Most of these are of orchids, whose formal complexity lies in their layers of multiple forms while most other flowers, such as the carnation or the rose, are composed only of repeat forms.

An architect by profession, Ignacio imparts structural elegance to his paintings, with a precisionist's clarity of line and a luminist's use of soft light and pure color. Georgia O'Keeffe comes to mind, particularly her enlargement of flower and plant forms.

But while hers has a surrealist overtone, his is more of a naturalist's concern. The small birds that stray among these flowers, however, seem less a naturalist's embellishment than to add a flash of chromatic vibrance to the muted monochrome of the petals.

Such combination of illustrative skills and naturalistic knowledge recalls James Audubon. Like him, Ignacio has found a practical use for his artistic training. And like his hand-tinted aquatints of the birds of America, Ignacio's watercolor pieces are beautiful works of art that are also scientific documents.

Ignacio, in fact, is an advocate of environmental awareness and is into the emerging field of green architecture. He has a garden, where he tends the flowers and espies the small birds he depicts on his canvases. (He admits he can only wish he could paint these flora and fauna in their natural habitats.)

The exhibit's centerpiece is a luminist rendering of Pag-asa, the Philippine eagle whose birth through human intervention a few years ago became a national cause for celebration.

The flower paintings have female names for titles, such as "Katrina," "Enriqueta," "Prosperidad," "Catherine," "Ciela," "Caridad," "Remedios," "Cristina," "Salvacion," "Kirsten," "Rachelle" (though that's debatable because there are also male flowers, which are just as showy).

Ignacio has no formal training in art. An Architecture graduate from University of the Philippines, he got his master's degree from Sheffield University and received a grant from the Swedish International Development Authority for Heritage Architecture Preservation at Lund University. He was encouraged into art-making by sculptor Napoleon Abueva and Dans.

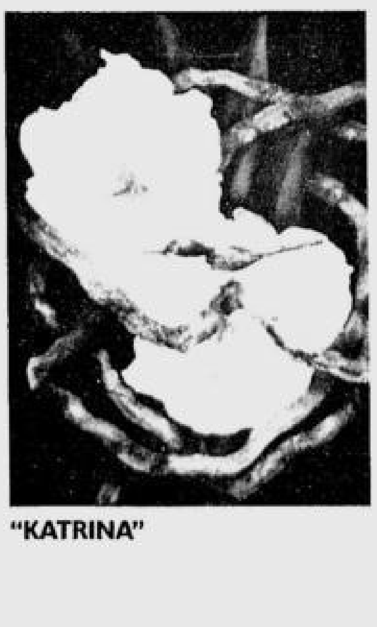
His favorite artist is Miró. He says he was already painting for some time before he encountered Audubon, but he admires the French naturalist's paintings. Of Filipino painters, he likes Onib Olmedo, Ang Kiukok, Azor Pascoguin, Ronald Ventura, Dans.

Ignacio teaches topical design and rendering techniques at the UP College of Architecture. He is active in fundraising programs for various organizations.

This exhibit will benefit the scholars of the Philippine Science High School Foundation. Ignacio has billed it as *"handog ng sining sa agham,"* that is, "art's gift to science."

He is obviously referring to the fundraising intent, but in a way it also reconciles the naturalist and the artist in him.

Constantino C. Tejero



"KATRINA"

"ENRIQUETA"

VISUAL ARTS

Navarroza at Silverlens

"Saturnine: A Collection of Portraits, Creatures, Glass and Shadows," by photographer Wawi Navarroza is on view until Feb. 17 in Silverlens Gallery, Warehouse 2, Yupangco Building, 2320 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati City.

'Destroy All Monsters' at West

Ronald Achacoso, Alex Aguilar, Dodo Dayao, Romeo Lee, Jonathan Olazo, Omar Taleon and Cris Villanueva tackle the "two-headed monster"—high and low art—in "Destroy All Monsters!" at West Gallery, Mary Santos Artcade, 48 West Ave., QC. Show runs until Feb. 23. Call 4110336.

Fernandez at Crucible

The Crucible Gallery (4/F, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City) presents "Clowns in Our Midst," by Edgar Talusan Fernandez, Jan. 30-Feb. 11. The artist pays tribute to the variegated faces of a clown. Call 6356061 for details.

Decorative arts workshop at Lopez

The Lopez Memorial Museum will hold the Decorative Arts Workshop on Feb 5, 7, 9 and 12, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The workshop will be handled by Tats Manahan and will focus on decorative techniques such as estufado, tisu or intaglio, and marbleizing. Taking off from the encarnacion process, which is used in the Philippines to create flesh tones in religious sculptures, Manahan will teach Italian and American methods of using the processes to create decorative works. Call 6312417 or 6359545.

Syjuco at Mag:net

Poet-artist Cesare A.X. Syjuco, the "master of literary hybrids," will open his latest one-man show, "Mighty Big Headstand," on Feb. 2 at 6 p.m. in Mag:net Makati, Paseo de Roxas and Sedeno St., Makati. "Mag:net is a lovely little gallery with intelligently planned spaces," says Syjuco. "I thought it would be nice, for a change, to use the gallery like a kind of book with clean new pages." Call 8177895.

Eghai Roxas at Penguin

For the National Arts Month in February, Penguin Gallery Café (604 Remedios St., Malate, Manila) will feature abstractionist Eghai Roxas' "Variations." The series consists of works, paintings, installation and performance art with the collaboration of artists, poets and musicians.

**ARTASIA Gallery's "S
Red" exhibit recently
at the Megamall Artw
exhibit was graced by
artists Seb, Gepte, Vic
Mx, who are all Arts
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Napoleon Abueva, Fre
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Philippine Daily Inquir
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Feliciano. The exhibit
Feb. 28. Call 6345945
decails.**

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How to begin a collection

Buy small works by young, emerging artists

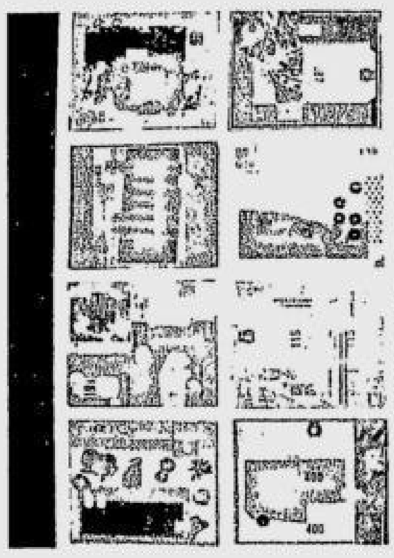
By James P. Ong

"IT'S ALWAYS WISE TO START with smaller works being done by young and emerging artists," advises Norberto Roldan, owner of Green Papaya Art Projects in UP Village, Quezon City. "This way, the collector can build up his collection with bigger, more major work, along with the young artists' development and growth in their practice."

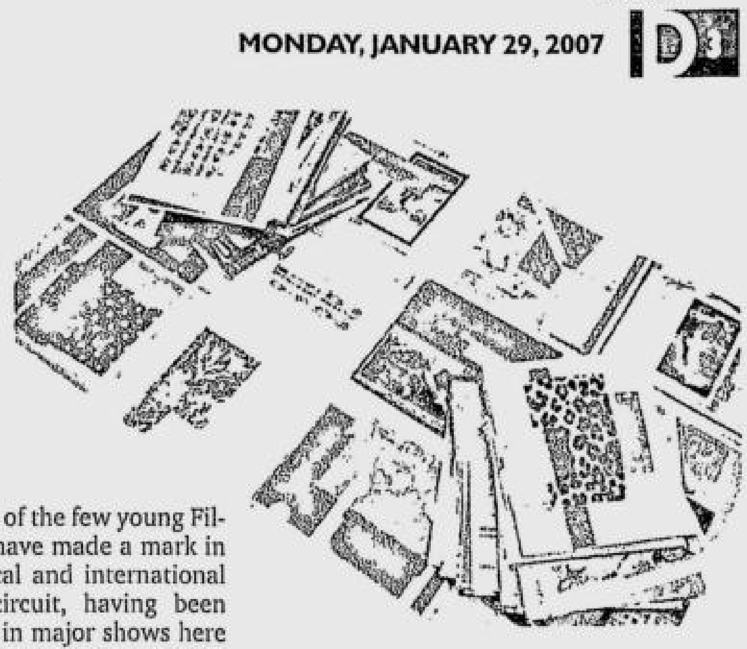
Start with: Collages by Geraldine Javier, at P500 each, available at Green Papaya (regular gallery price anywhere would be P900).

What it is: Javier's works are done intricately with different layers of recycled paper stock, with found prints of different images, patterns and texture, giving each work a distinct constructed look.

What to do with it: "One work, framed neatly with wide white matting, can hang nicely on a wall," advises Roldan. "However, a diptych [two collages, individually framed and hung side by side], can look great hanging above a console table, headboard or anywhere in the house that's neutral and uncluttered."

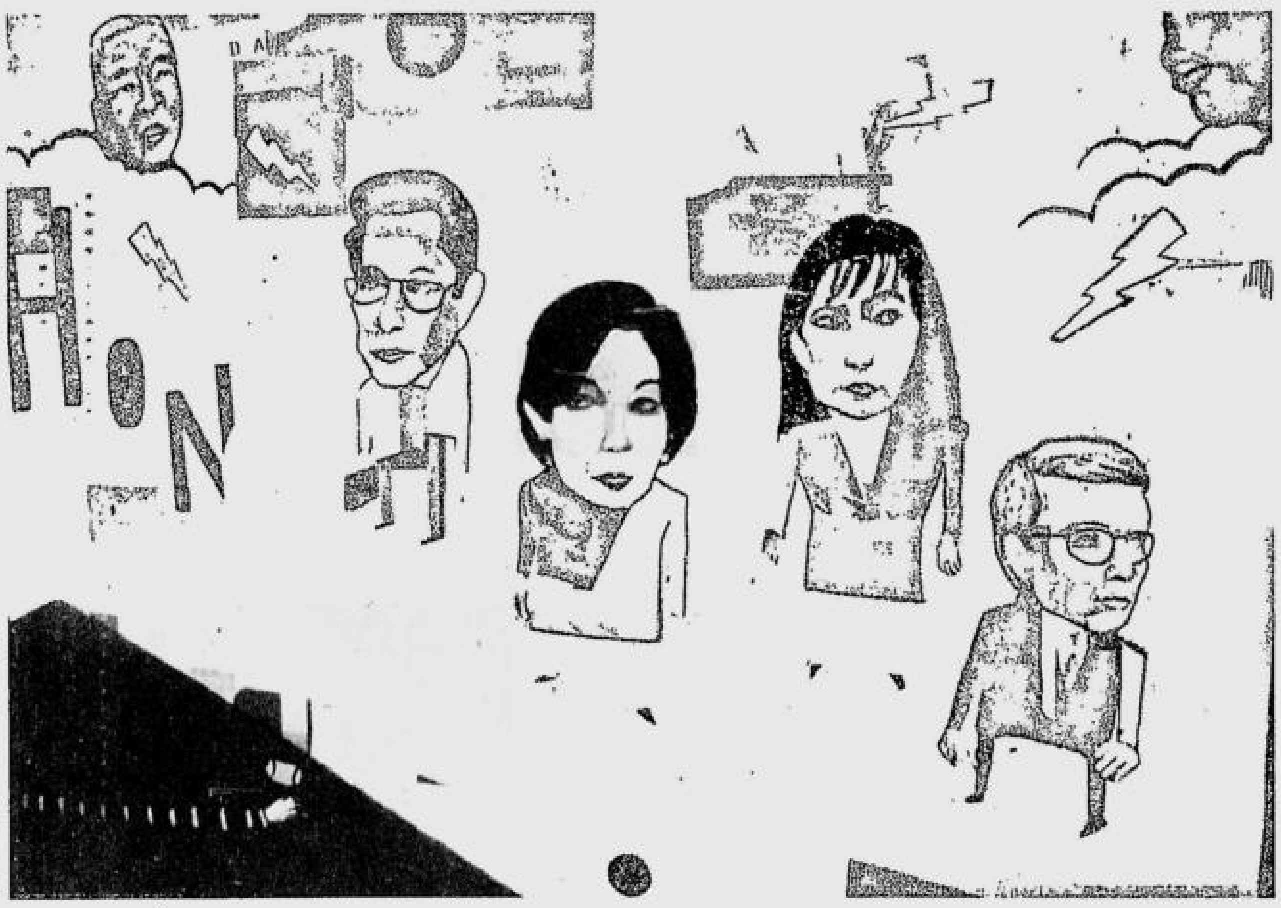


Why it's an investment: Javier is one of the few young Filipinas who have made a mark in both the local and international exhibition circuit, having been represented in major shows here and abroad. She is an original member of the seminal artist collective Surrounded by Water, a 2006 CCP 13 Artists awardee. Recently she broke into the auction market, selling almost half a million pesos at the recent Christie's auction in Hong Kong.



COLLAGES by Geraldine Javier, a steal at P500 each, can be individually mounted on a frame.

Green Papaya Art Projects (www.greenpapaya.org) is at 124A Maginhawa St., East Teachers Village, Diliman, QC. E-mail info@greenpapaya.org or text 0919-4152720.



WORKS by Louie Cordero, part of 10 drawings commissioned by the 2002 Philippine Yearbook

THE NIGHT Market opened with an inventory of 200 artworks. The collection is replenished weekly.

Art at a steal

From page D1

to be more experimental and which are not usually seen in mainstream gallery exhibitions—enough reason for these works to be considered valuable to private/corporate collections," he adds.

Santi's gift

Green Papaya represents mainly young and mid-career Filipino contemporary artists who are making their individual marks here and abroad—including Cultural Center of the Philippines' 13 Artists awardees Nunelucio Alvarado, Poklong Anading, Juan Alcazaren, Santiago Bose, Imelda Cajipe-Endaya, Mariano Ching, Lena Cobangbang, Luisito Cordero, Nona Garcia, Nilo Ilarde, Geraldine Javier, Lao Lianben, Jonathan Olazo, Jayson Oliveria, Manuel Ocampo, Gary-Ross Pastrana, Gerry Tan and Wire Tuazon.

"We earn from the market by selling works donated by the artists," says Roldan, "[We want] to raise funds to sustain Green Papaya's operation and various artistic programs."

Among these donations were the four works by Bose, which actually came from the artist's last one-man exhibition, "Traveling Bones Gather No Stones," also held at Green Papaya.

"Santi was already being represented by a Hong Kong-based gallery then, so his prices were computed in dollars. He gave me a work... and Santi, a very sensitive person that he was and knowing how we were having difficulties running an artspace, said something like: 'Here's one for your rainy days,'" recalls Roldan.

"We had many, many rainy days since Santi passed away in 2002 but we never thought yet of letting his work go... until the idea of The Night Market came as the last recourse to save Green Papaya from folding up," he adds. "We sold Bose's works less our 40-percent gallery markup. It was both painful and sweet. It was hard for me to let go of Santi's works, but it was sweet of him to have saved Green Papaya from financial fatigue."

Still available

The Night Market opened with an inventory of no less than 200 works. The gallery will maintain that volume with fresh inventories.

As of press time, other noteworthy artworks still available include Louie Cordero's suite of 10 artworks commissioned for the 2002 Philippine Yearbook.

"Undoubtedly, this is the only work that made a biting commentary on the political situation [Edsa 2] at the time, making the entire collection an important historical account," explains Roldan.

The entire collection is a real steal at P90,000 (P9,000 per artwork).

Another giveaway is Geraldine Javier's series of collages at P500 *(see sidebar)*.

And this coming weekend, Green Papaya will make available a rare collection of three big paintings done by Vicente Butron (a Philippine-born and Sydney-based Australian Conceptual artist) during his artist-residency in Manila in 1998.

The works are in collaboration with Bernardo Pacquing, Gerardo Tan and Katya Guerrero. A fourth one, with Ronald Achacoso, is already in the collection of the Ateneo Art Gallery.

Is it ethical?

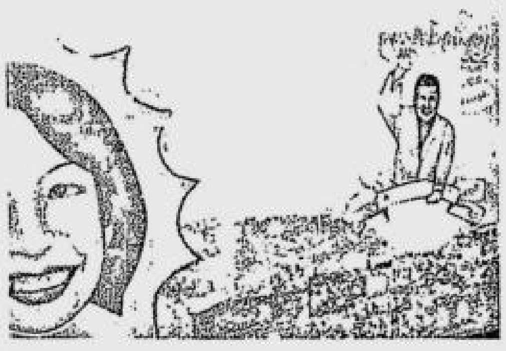
The Night Market, says Roldan, is really a take-off from their previous program called The Art Market—"a laboratory that seeks to confront issues concerning art as commodity, an experimental marketing approach that challenges notions of art agency within the context of existing systems and practices of mainstream commercial galleries."

Eventually, the program will have different themes: Black and White Collection at The Night Market; Small Works; Contemporary Photographs; Nudes.

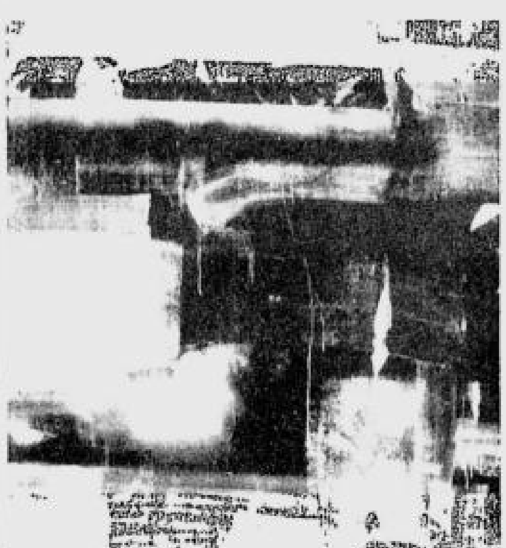
"I'm not sure if we are setting a trend, but we are aware of its implications. We anticipate that this marketing laboratory will raise a few questions regarding ethical practice in the commercial gallery system," Roldan opines.

"It looks very promising, so we will keep on doing it for as long as we have the support of the artists who can provide us with fresh inventories," he says.

Green Papaya Art Projects is at 124A Maginhawa St., East Teachers Village, Diliman, QC. E-mail at info@greenpapaya.org; visit www.greenpapaya.org; text 0919-4152720.



ANOTHER Cordero artwork



"UNTITLED I," by Eghai Roxas

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It opens on Feb. 2 at 7:30 p.m. and runs until Feb. 15.

Modesto at 7

Jakarta-based Filipino artist, Fernando Modesto will exhibit new oil paintings in "Eiffel in Love," at Galerie 7 (46 Calumpit St., Veterans Village, Project 7, QC). The exhibit will focus on a favorite motif of the artist, the angel, and his fascination with Paris. Fernando first spent time in Paris in the early '80s when he was a British Council scholar studying printmaking in Central St. Martin's College of Art and Design, London. "I went to Paris during the summer break and fell in love with the city, which explains the title and theme of the show" he says. "I always remember the times I spent in the Pompidou Center admiring the sculptures of Niki St. Phalle, and her colors and shapes have left a memorable impression."

Campus press history exhibit at UST Museum

The University of Santo Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences has extended the run of the exhibit, "The Varsitarian at 80: The Struggle and the Glory of the Campus Press in the Philippines," until Feb. 15. The exhibit chronicles the rich history of The Varsitarian, the 79-year-old official student paper of UST and the most respected Catholic campus paper in the Philippines. Founded in 1928 by José Villa Panganiban, who would later head the National Language Institute and write the Diksyunaryo-Tesauro Ingles-Pilipino, The Varsitarian has produced top journalists, writers, leaders, humanists and even National Artists (F. Sionil José, Bienvenido Lumbera, Daisy Hontiveros-Avellana, J. Elizalde Navarro). The Varsitarian is the only campus paper in the country to have an entry in the Cultural Center of the Philippines Encyclopedia for the Arts. The exhibit is part of a broader series by the UST Museum on the history of printing in the Philippines. Call 4061611 loc. 8235 or 7811815.

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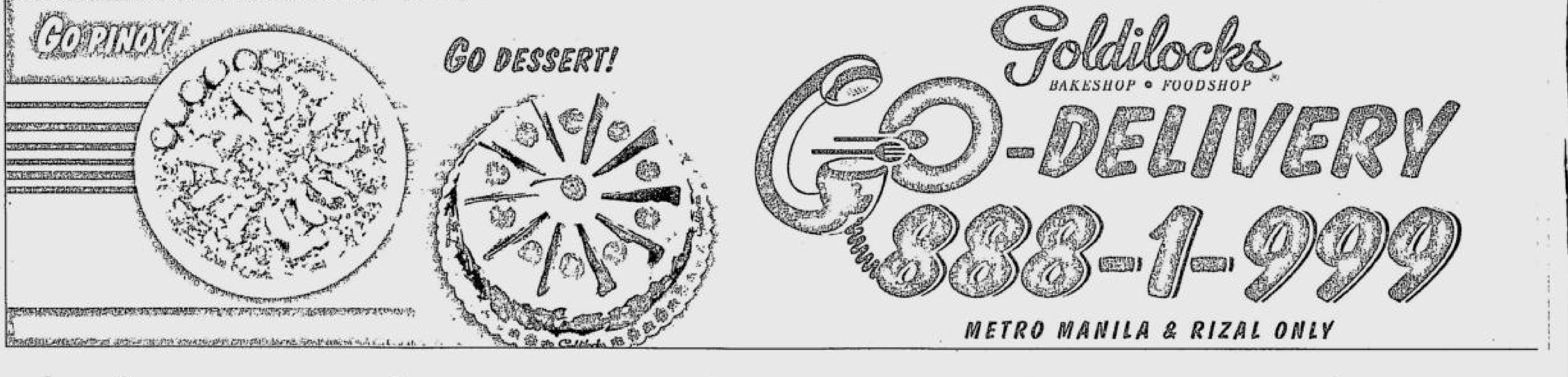

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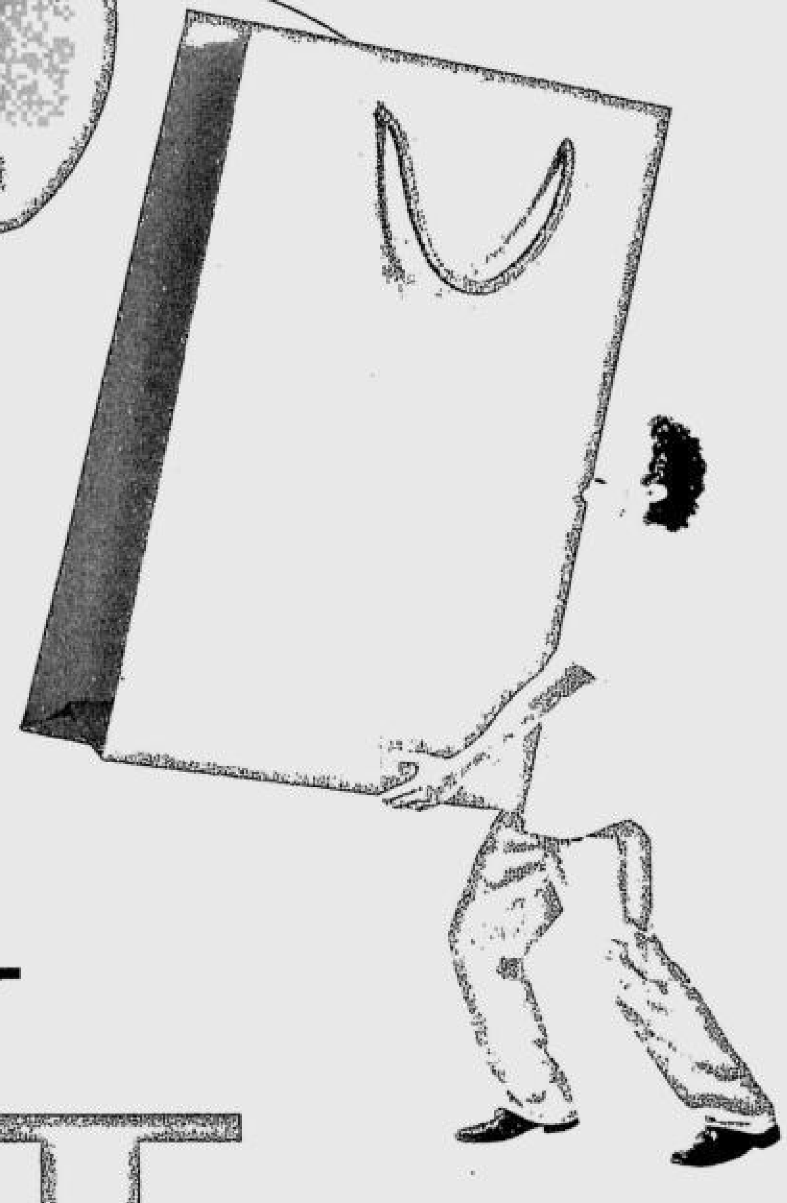
A weekend of great value buys awaits shoppers during the 3-DAY SALE at SM City North Edsa, SM City Sucat and SM City Sta. Rosa on February 2, 3 and 4.

The sale event – SM Supermalls' first for 2007 – offers a wide selection of merchandise tagged at up to 50% off. The value mix includes products and services of anchor stores, shops, restaurants and more.

upto 50% off great selections



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from the makers of XTREME MAGIC SING

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Every P500 single-receipt purchase (cash or charge) from SM Department Store, SM Supermarket, SM Hypermarket or from any participating mall establishment (food or non-food) entitles customers to join the raffle.

At stake are 60 units of Magic Sing MP3 Players (20 winners for each of the 3 malls).

The electronic draw is scheduled at 5 pm on Monday, February 5, 2007 at the ABS-CBN Interactive office.

Value shopping at SM NORTH EDSA

Strategically located in the hub of the dynamic North Triangle area in Quezon City, the sprawling ***SM City North Edsa complex*** is truly the one-stop destination of thousands of shoppers who are on the lookout for value finds, good eats and wholesome fun. Mall hours extended 'til 11 pm on Friday and Saturday only.

Catch the excitement of first-class shopping, dining and entertainment at ***The Block***. Designed as the ultimate shopping destination of discriminating northside mallers, The Block houses dozens of high-end stores and boutiques showcasing signature merchandise.

CYBERZONE

Calling all techies! Hop on over to ***Cyberzone*** at SM City North Edsa, the coolest place to get wired to the latest gadgets and gizmos, and get connected to the latest mobile phones up for grabs in the 'Zone.

Family shopping at SM SUCAT

Great choices are in store for mallers at ***SM City Sucat*** on February 2, 3 and 4.

At ***SM Department Store***, shoppers are invited to avail of hefty savings on apparel, shoes and fashion accessories. At ***SM Hypermarket***, the whole family can enjoy picking out loads of specially-priced fresh produce and groceries. Personal care products and home appliances are also available at attractive discounts.

City shopping at SM STA. ROSA

Just a few minutes away by car from the southern tip of the Metro Manila area lies ***SM City Sta. Rosa*** -- city of fun, shopping and eating out.

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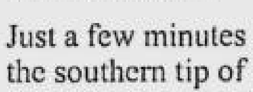

Parking spaces have been reserved for SM Advantage members at SM City North Edsa, SM City Sucat, and SM City Sta. Rosa during the 3-Day Sale.

- First come, first served
- Standard parking fee applies in SM City North Edsa.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback:
inquirer ent name/age/city/message
to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

P10
ang isa sa lahat ng
DUNKIN' DONUTS
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Rape scandal docu has Sundance abuzz

PARK CITY, Utah—One of the most notorious yet long-forgotten scandals in Hollywood history involving the brutal rape of a teenage chorus girl is back in the spotlight at the Sundance Film Festival.

US writer-director David Stenn's "Girl 27" lifts the lid on the rape of Patricia Douglas at a wild party organized by studio giants Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer at a Los Angeles ranch in 1937.

Douglas, then a starry-eyed 17-year-old, was one of around 120 chorus girls bused into a party for MGM sales staff at Culver City, where 500 cases of whiskey and champagne were on hand for around 300 male revellers.

Stenn's film, which includes hitherto unseen archival footage and interviews with Douglas and others involved in the case, explores the attack and the subsequent cover-up.

"MGM took her to a studio doctor who told her it never happened, they took her home and told her it never happened," Stenn told AFP. "She went to the district attorney who said it never happened. And then she went public. She didn't want another girl to go through [that]."

IT TOOK a while for Patricia Douglas (above), recluse at 87, to trust the filmmaker.

'Party favors'

Douglas was raped after she and the other chorus girls were effectively presented to the MGM salesmen as "party favors," Stenn said.

"They were put in skimpy cowgirl outfits and heavy camera makeup and bused to a remote location with no phones or transportation," he said.

"The men took a look at these over-made-up, under-dressed girls and assumed 'These are our party favors'."

A grand jury failed to indict Douglas' alleged attacker, a 36-year-old salesman. But in an unusual legal twist, she pursued justice by filing a lawsuit against Ross and studio executives in the Los Angeles Superior Court.

When that case was tossed out, Douglas went to the Federal Court, arguing that her civil

RAPE/ E3

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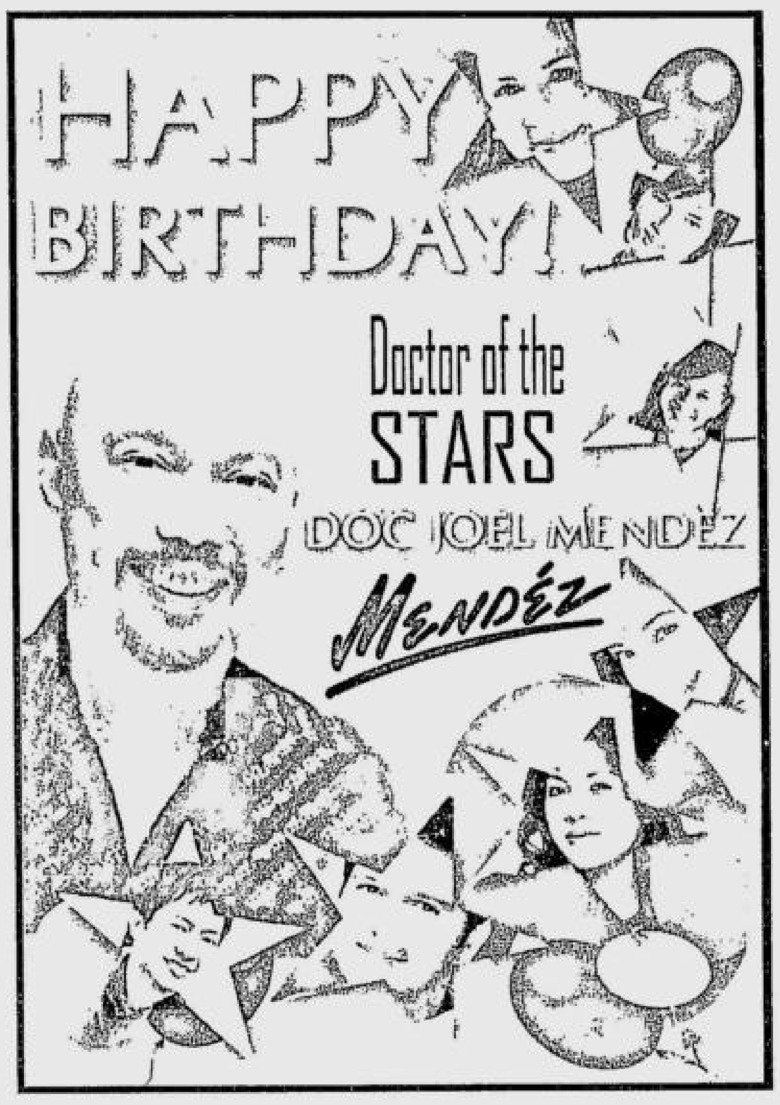

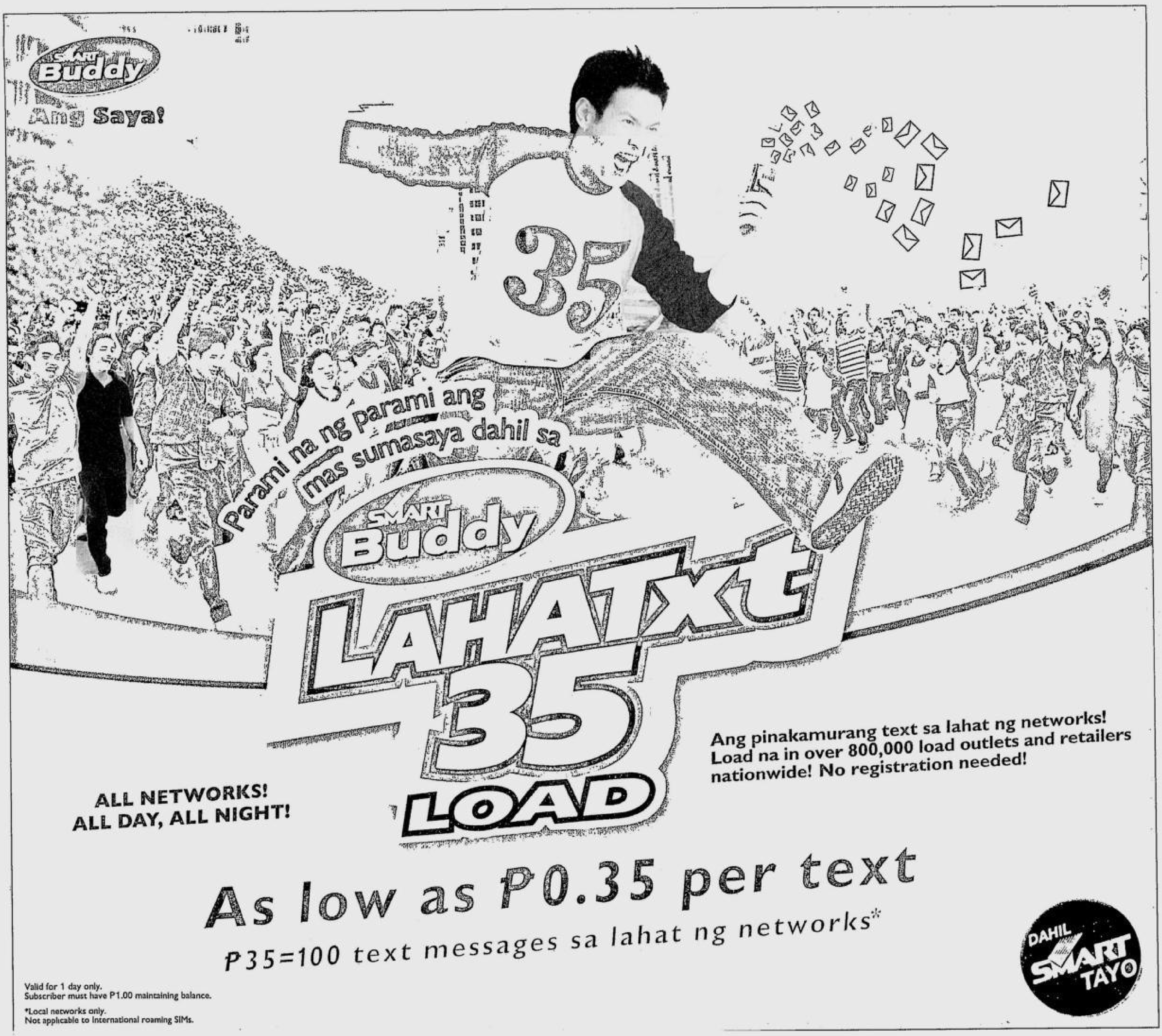

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Reality TV is here to stay

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST YEAR, SOME PEOPLE PREDICTED THE end of the "Reality TV" craze on the small tube, citing the decline in the ratings of some theretofore hit programs.

But, it looks like we've been invited to a wake with an empty coffin, because some reality shows are still doing exceedingly well on the small screen.

Topping the list is "American Idol," the first 2007 season telecast of which was viewed by some 37 million people! This affirms the show's position as *the* most popular program on the tube in the United States, and stops the doom-and-gloomers in mid-ululation.

"Survivor" has also remained popular, even on its umpteenth reincarnation. And a great variety of unique new reality shows has been launched, indicating how pervasive the program type has become.

Instructively, the reality trend has included celebrity video diaries and behind-the-scenes views of show biz events, but most of the hit shows are based on challenges and competitions.

From "The Amazing Race," "Last Comic Standing" and "America's Next Top Model" to "Iron Chef: America," "Cold Turkey," "The Apprentice," and "The Biggest Loser," reality shows pit eager and ambitious contestants against each other, with the winner romping off with huge prizes in cash and kind.

It's this competition factor that provides the empathetic "hook" that enveigles viewers to empathize with the "ordinary" people who are compelled to perform extraordinary feats on reality shows.

The latest variations include: "The Monastery," a competition to see which young applicant will survive the holy rigors of the monk-making process.

After "Rock Star: INXS," another band competition, plus a separate search for the male and female leads in a new production of "Grease," a full 30 years after it made stars out of John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John.

"Ambush Makeover" and "The Swan" totally transform ugly ducklings into beauties with perfect plummage.

The same transformation is effected in rooms and entire homes in "Extreme Makeover" and other shows focusing on home construction, decor and landscaping.

There is, in fact, a cable channel that devotes itself to medical concerns and fills its programming slots with one reality-based program after another.

So, would-be mourners should look for other wakes to weep and caterwaul at. The reality is, it looks like, for all of its excesses, insufficiencies and redundancies, Reality TV is here to stay.

'I Didn't Know That'

Every Saturday at 8 p.m., the National Geographic Channel screens "I Didn't Know That," an action-packed series that follows intrepid industrial scientists Ambrose and Philips as they investigate how things are made, what's inside them, how they're tested, and how they work.

Maverick and Ariel

After years on the tube as gung-ho, gonzo comedians, Maverick and Ariel have come out with their debut album, "Collector's Item, Vol. 5," with 11 tracks in varied musical genres that showcase the duo's versatility.

Cuts include "Ligaya Machine," "Pinay Gal," "Funky Bop," "Haydie," "Dynamite," "Paniwalaan," "Sikat na Laus" and "Banggaan Na."

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 BABEL
3 DÉJÀ VU
4 LITTLE CHILDREN
PREMIERE
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 DÉJÀ VU
3 AGENT X 44
4 LITTLE CHILDREN

starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266160
3 AGENT X 44
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) LITTLE CHILDREN
5 RESRVED

metropolis star
www.clickitbecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 5433994
1 AGENT X 44
2 LITTLE CHILDREN
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

THEATRES
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 AGENT X 44
3 DÉJÀ VU

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena
1 AGENT X 44
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 SAW - 3 / ROB-B-HOOD
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 ERAGON
4 DÉJÀ VU
5 BABEL
6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
7 BLOOD DIAMOND
8 LITTLE CHILDREN
9 KASAL KASALI KASALO
10 AGENT X 44

Blue Wave
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 (DOLBY) AGENT X 44
3 (DOLBY) ROB-B-HOOD
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 LITTLE CHILDREN
3 AGENT X 44
4 KAMASUTRA-3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 AGENT X 44
2 SHAOLIN EVIL DEAD -3
3 PLAESE CALL
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA 2000
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 AGENT X 44
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 BLOOD DIAMOND

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 DÉJÀ VU

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 ERAGON
3 KAMASUTRA-3
4 A GOOD YEAR

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 AGENT X 44
2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) DÉJÀ VU
2 (DOLBY) NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 (DOLBY) NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 (DOLBY) LITTLE CHILDREN

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 SAW - 3
2 AGENT X 44
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6773
1 DÉJÀ VU
2 AGENT X 44
3 ERAGON

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 AGENT X 44
3 DEJA VU
4 ROB-B-HOOD

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 AGENT X 44
3 DEJA VU

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 AGENT X 44
2 ERAGON

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 SPIRIT TRAP
2 BAYARAN
3 BASA SA DAGAT
4 ERAGON

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 SAW - 3
2 ROOM SERVICE
3 AGENT X 44
4 GAMITAN
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 ZU WARRIOR
2 SPIRIT TRAP
3 AGENT X 44
4 SAW - 3

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD
2 KAMASUTRA - 3

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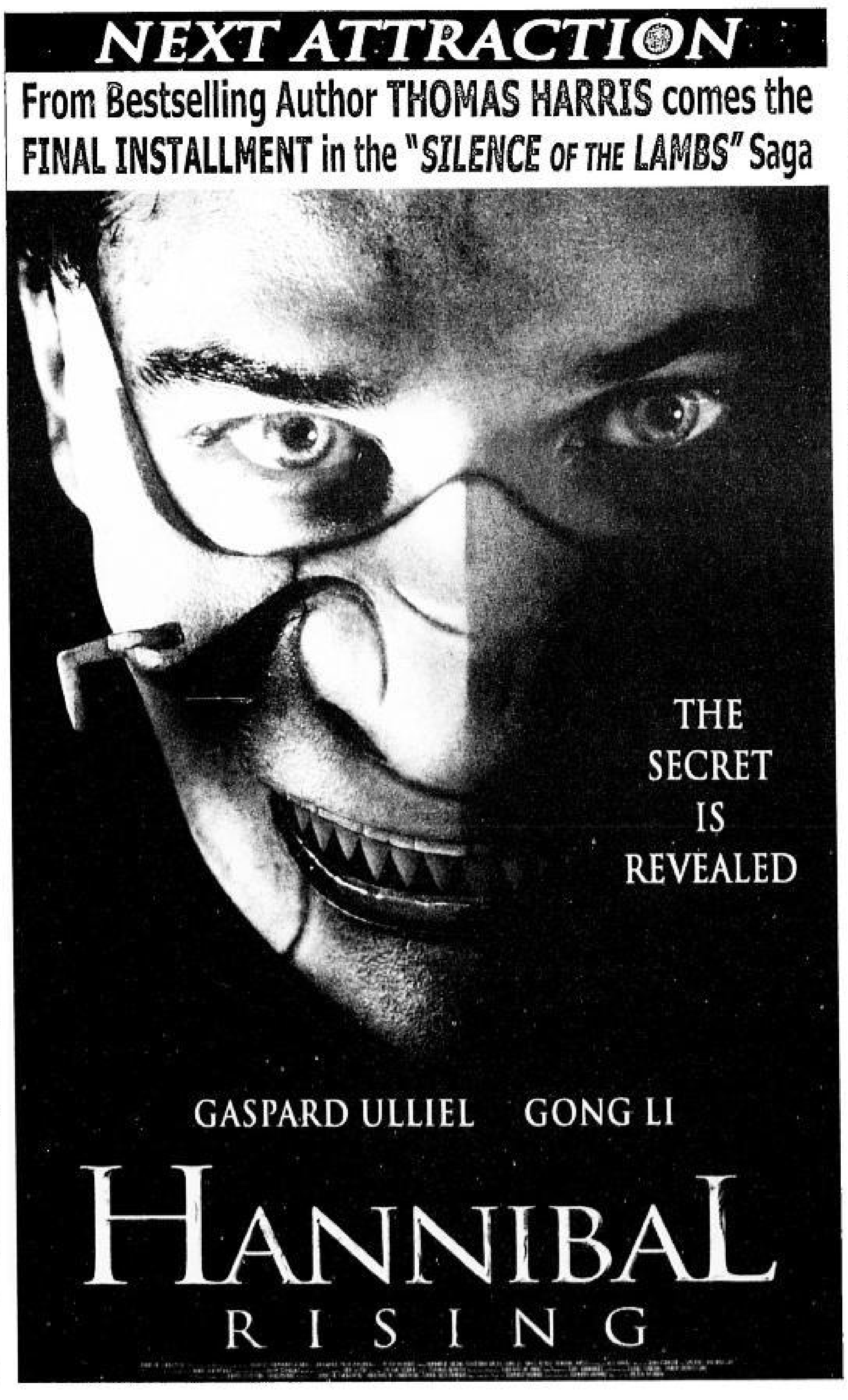
LITTLE CHILDREN 12:20 / 3:20 / 6:20 / 9:20
AGENT X-44 1 00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40
SAW 3 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50
DEJAVU 1:20 / 4:10 / 7:00 / 9:50
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX
ERAGON 2:10 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40
THE BLOOD DIAMOND 1:05 / 4:00 / 6:55 / 9:50
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 1:35 / 4:05 / 6:35 / 9:05
ALIMALL 5
AGENT X-44 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
ROB-B-HOOD 1:00 / 3:30 / 6:00 / 8:30
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 12:15 / 2:55 / 5:35 / 8:15
LITTLE CHILDREN 11:30 / 2:30 / 5 30 / 8:30
DEJAVU 12:00 / 2:50 / 5:40 / 8:30
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS
For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph
ARANETA COLISEUM
PBA SEMIS
JAN 31, WED 2007
4:35 GINEBRA vs TALK N TEXT · 7:20 RED BULL vs SAN MIGUEL
LOVING ARA
February 3, Saturday 8 pm



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GASPARD ULLIEL GONG LI
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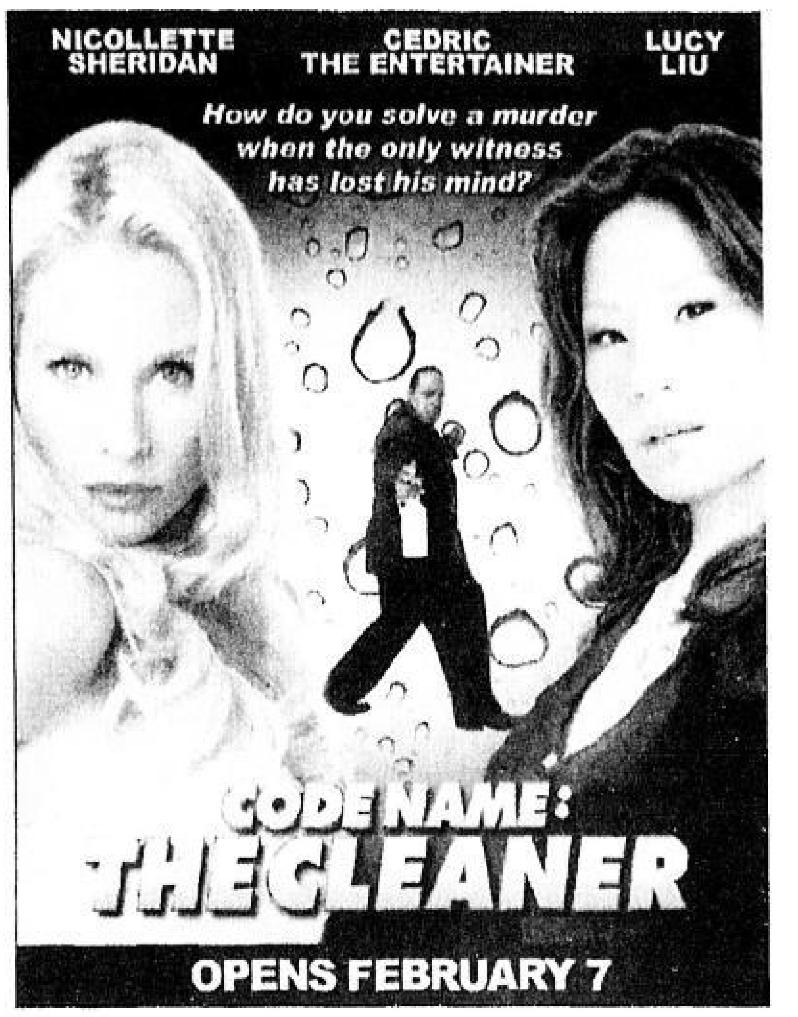

NICOLLETTE SHERIDAN
CEDRIC THE ENTERTAINER
LUCY LIU
How do you solve a murder when the only witness has lost his mind?
CODE NAME: THE CLEANER
OPENS FEBRUARY 7

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
MTRCB GP
12 20 2 45 5.10, 7 35, 10.00
2 BABEL
MTRCB PG-13
12 35 3 25, 6 15, 9 05
3 DEJA VU
MTRCB PG-13
2 00, 4 40 7 20, 10:00
4 LITTLE CHILDREN
MTRCB R-18
1 00, 4 00, 7 00, 10 00
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NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
MTRCB GP
1 30 3 55 6 20 8 45
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BLOOD DIAMOND R13 12:50,3:50,6:50,9:50	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM G 1:00,3:30,6:00,8:30	BABEL PG13 2:00,4:50,7:40,10:30
DÉJÀ VU PG13 1:15,4:00,6:45,9:30	LITTLE CHILDREN R18 2:30,5:10,7:50	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM G 12:30,3:00,5:30,8:00,10:30

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CINEMA 2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 10:30, 1:20, 4:10 7:00, 9:50 GP
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NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 LITTLE CHILDREN 10:30, 1:25, 4:25 7:25, 10:25 R-18
CINEMA 4 BABEL 10:50, 1:45, 4:40 7:35, 10:30 PG - 13
CINEMA 5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 11:10, 2:00, 4:50 7:40, 10:30 GP
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

Jan 23, 2007	Marissa Sanchez	8:30 PM
Feb 02 & 03, 2007	Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby	8:30 PM
Feb 7 & 8, 2007	Agot Isidro "Back to Basics"	8:30 PM
Feb 13 & 14, 2007	Ogie Alcasid	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
JAN 23, 30, 2007	DYORDS KO PO	8:30 PM
JAN 24, 2007	"PAKNERS" 9 Ball Celebrity Challenge	6:00 PM

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DAILY TIMES
WILD
FILM
PARTY

NEWSPAPER account of the 1937 scandal.

Rape scandal docu . . .

From page E1

rights had been violated. Stenn said he believed the case was eventually dropped because Douglas' mother and legal guardian was given hush money.

Stenn had stumbled on the case while researching a biography about the legendary Jean Harlow. He tracked down Douglas, nearing her 90s and living in a dingy apartment.

"It was stunning but ... heart-breaking. She hung up on me," said Stenn of his initial call to Douglas. "She proceeded to hang up on me for many months after. The film details the course of our relationship. It's a very curious position to be in to call someone and know their deepest darkest secret. The woman hasn't left her home in decades," said Stenn.

Transformation

Stenn, a former writer for television shows including "Hill Street Blues," says it took years to win Douglas's approval before she finally opened up. His movie is based on a story he wrote about the case for Vanity Fair magazine.

"The movie charts the course of her transformation from going from someone who was ashamed of what happened and that's why she wouldn't go out, to someone who learned to be proud of herself and come to understand that what she had done was not only remarkable but unique.

"There's never been another woman who has sued MGM or any movie studio or anything like this and certainly no one who took her case all the way to Federal Court," he added.

(The Sundance festival winds up today, Manila time.) *AFP*

DID YOU KNOW...

Kidman in hospital

LOS ANGELES—Oscar-winning Australian actress Nicole Kidman, 39—the highest-paid actress in Hollywood—was taken to a hospital after a car she was traveling in crashed during the shooting here of a science-fiction film, police said. *AFP*

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
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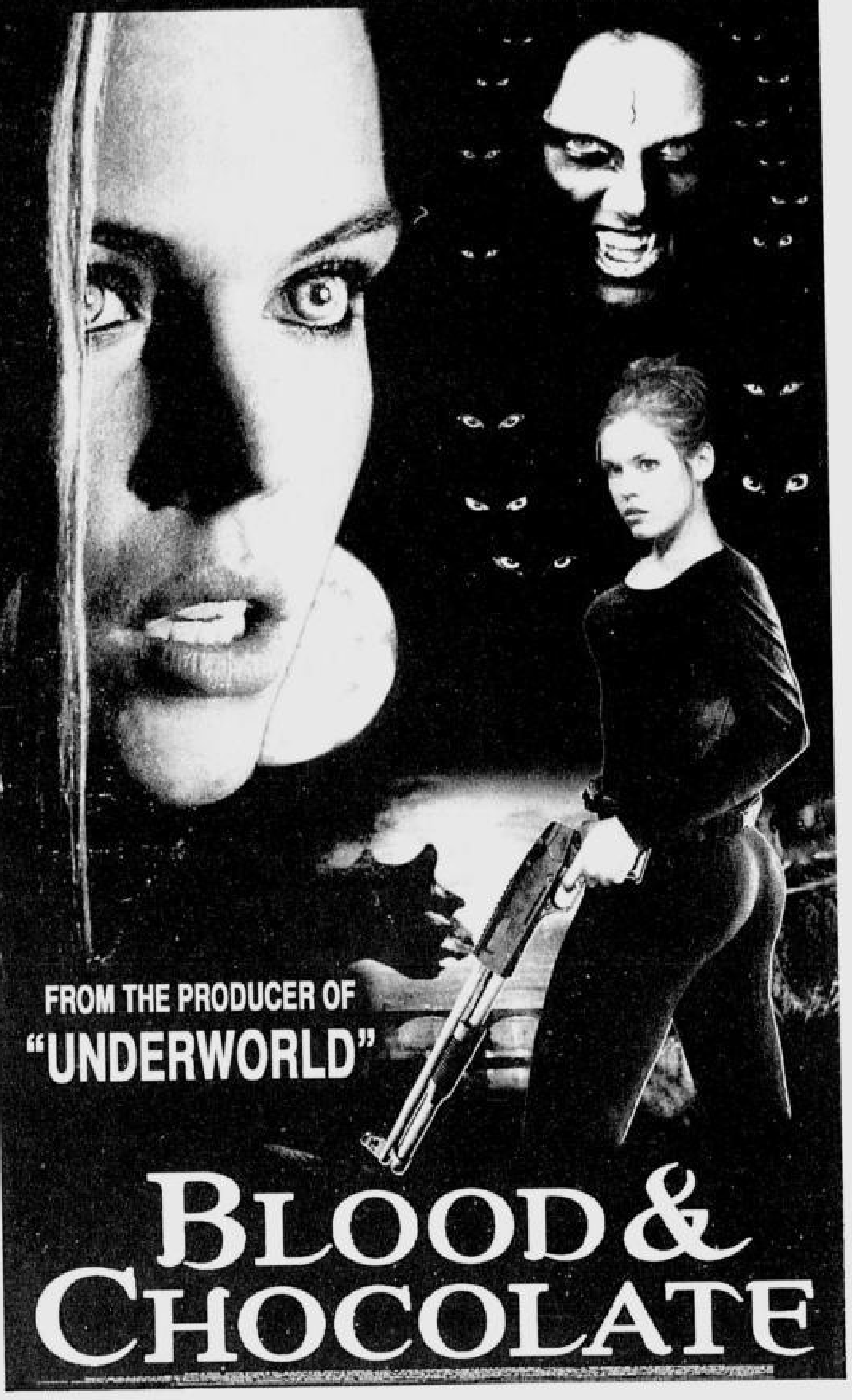
For inquiries, call
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	DÉJÀ VU	2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:05	PG-13
2	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40, 11:05	G
3	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30	G
4	LITTLE CHILDREN	2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10	R-18

Roberts Fanning Buscemi Cleese Winfrey
The Entertainer Bates McIntire Redford Church Benjamin
Charlotte's Web
G FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE
Help Is Coming From Above
CharlottesWebMovie.com
IN THEATERS JANUARY 31

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
OPENS JAN. 31
WEREWOLVES vs HUMANS... WHO WILL SURVIVE?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AT THE CINEMAS
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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 ERAGON	2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	3 BABEL	4 AGENT X44
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 BABEL	2 DÉJÀ VU	3 THX NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 INNOCENT VOICES	5 STRANGER THAN FICTION	6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	7 LITTLE CHILDREN
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 BABEL	2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX BABEL GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 STRANGER THAN FICTION GUARANTEED SEATS	4 LITTLE CHILDREN GUARANTEED SEATS	5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS	2 BABEL		
	3 LITTLE CHILDREN	4 AGENT X44	5 DÉJÀ VU	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	2 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS	3 ERAGON	4 AGENT X44
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	2 LITTLE CHILDREN		
	3 DÉJÀ VU	4 AGENT X44	5 BABEL	

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Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Ford Car Exhibit January 24 to 30, 2007	Power Rangers Space Patrol Delta (SPD) Meet & Greet Event January 21, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Artbeat Album Launching January 28, 2007	Nestle Breakfast Cereals Event January 6 to 7, 2007

GREENBELT — Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek presents Collection of Jun Escario
January 24 to February 4, 2007

GREENBELT Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents MOOSE MURDERS
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Ayala MUSEUM — Zero-in 5 Convergence Black Bouquet: Juvenal Sanso Prints
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★★★★
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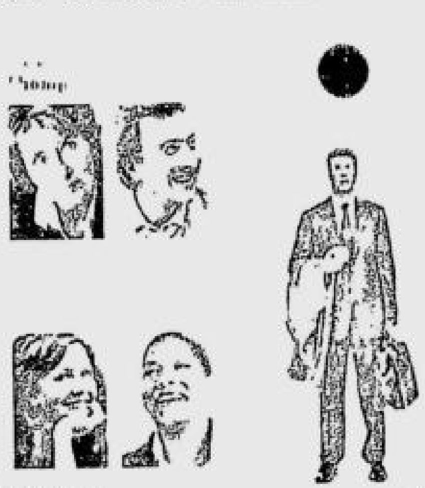
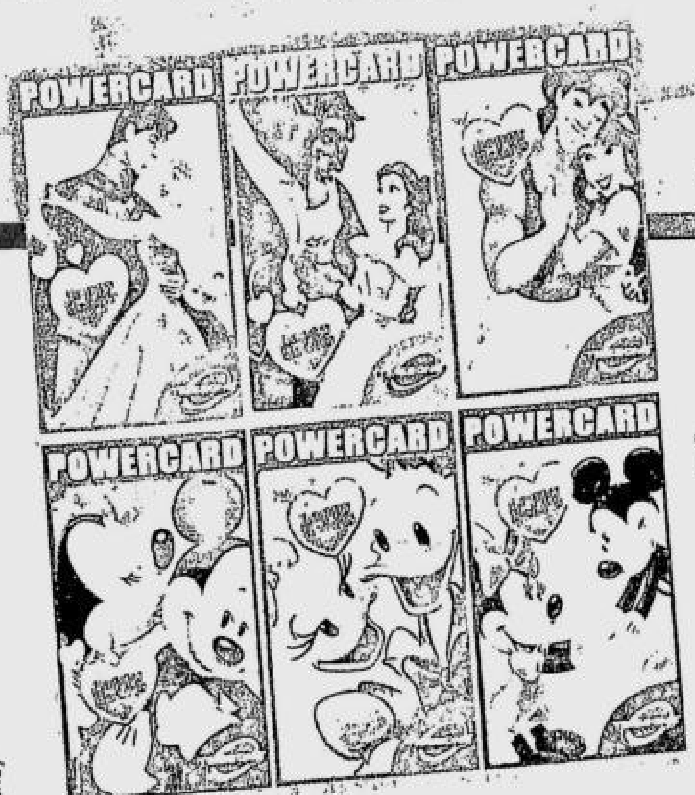
--- Norm Wilner / METRO TORONTO
"... MAGIC..."
--- Peter Travers / ROLLING STONE
★★★★
"BRILLIANT!"
----Shawn Edward / FOX-TV
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
Ayala CINEMAS
Will Ferrell
Stranger than Fiction



COLUMBIA PICTURES glorietta GREENBELT



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ENTERTAINMENT

CHOOSE YOUR Valentine SHOW

RAYMOND LAUCHENGCO

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR. AND so, once again, we are helping you pick the best show for that special date, by asking the concert artists who are going onstage what they have in store for audiences.

SHOW TIME

Raymond Lauchengco

"Classic Romance 2: Walking on Sunshine," Feb. 13 & 14 at Teatrino, Greenhills. Call 891-9999.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

I've been married almost three years and every year, I've done a show. I'm a singer and I love performing love songs. It makes perfect sense for me to be onstage as the world celebrates love. My wife doesn't mind; she knows she's the reason I'm singing again.

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you ever experienced?

Just before we were married, the INQUIRER held a contest that invited couples to share their most romantic Valentine date. My wife wrote about ours and ... she won! I didn't even know she had joined. It was such a thrill seeing our story published.

> Lea: I think all love songs are the most romantic in [different] ways.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

As long as I'm with my wife—whether in a fancy restaurant or at the grocery store.

Who's your fantasy date?

Can't you tell?

What's the most romantic love song?

"What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life," by Michelle Legrand.

If you were not doing a show, who would you watch?

If Tony Bennett were around, I'd be there.

Why should we watch your show?

Because Tony Bennett isn't here. Ha-ha!

AGOT ISIDRO

Agot Isidro

"Back to Basics," Feb. 7 and 8, Music Museum. Call 721-0635.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

My husband and I share a romantic dinner together. It doesn't matter where—at home or in a fancy restaurant, with friends or family.

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you've ever experienced?

Five years ago, my husband and I decided to stay home and cook a Valentine meal together. I spent the whole day looking for fresh ingredients. He was supposed to take care of dessert, but I ended up doing that, too. We lit candles, played music and had a great time, without the traffic and long wait.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

Great food, flowing drinks, engaging conversation and relaxing evening.

Who's your fantasy date?

Bono of U2.

What's the most romantic love song?

"Maybe I'm Amazed" by Paul McCartney.

If you were not doing a show, who would you watch?

Sharon Cuneta or Ara Mina. I always support my friends.

Why should we watch your show?

I will be singing a lot of personal favorites—romantic, sentimental love songs.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

LEA SALONGA

Lea Salonga

"Lea Uncut/Lea in Love ... With Cebu/Live in Davao," Feb. 11, 14, 17, PICC Plenary Hall, Waterfront (Lahug) Cebu, Convention Hall of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Davao.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

Rob (Chien, her husband) and I celebrate it with an intimate, romantic night out—a great excuse to try a new restaurant and have some great food!

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you've ever experienced?

I don't know about "romantic" ... but I remember a really fun one where a lot of us couples and a few singles having a candlelight dinner in Los Angeles. It was Rob's and my first Valentine and we elected to spend it with good friends ... and it was wonderful.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

A romantic atmosphere, soft music and lighting, a bottle of wine and great (not good, but *great*) food.

Who's your fantasy date?

Hahahahahaha! Oh goodness, I don't know. I don't think about such things anymore! *Hahahahaha!*

What's the most romantic love song?

I think any and all love songs are the most romantic in [different] ways. I can't think of just one.

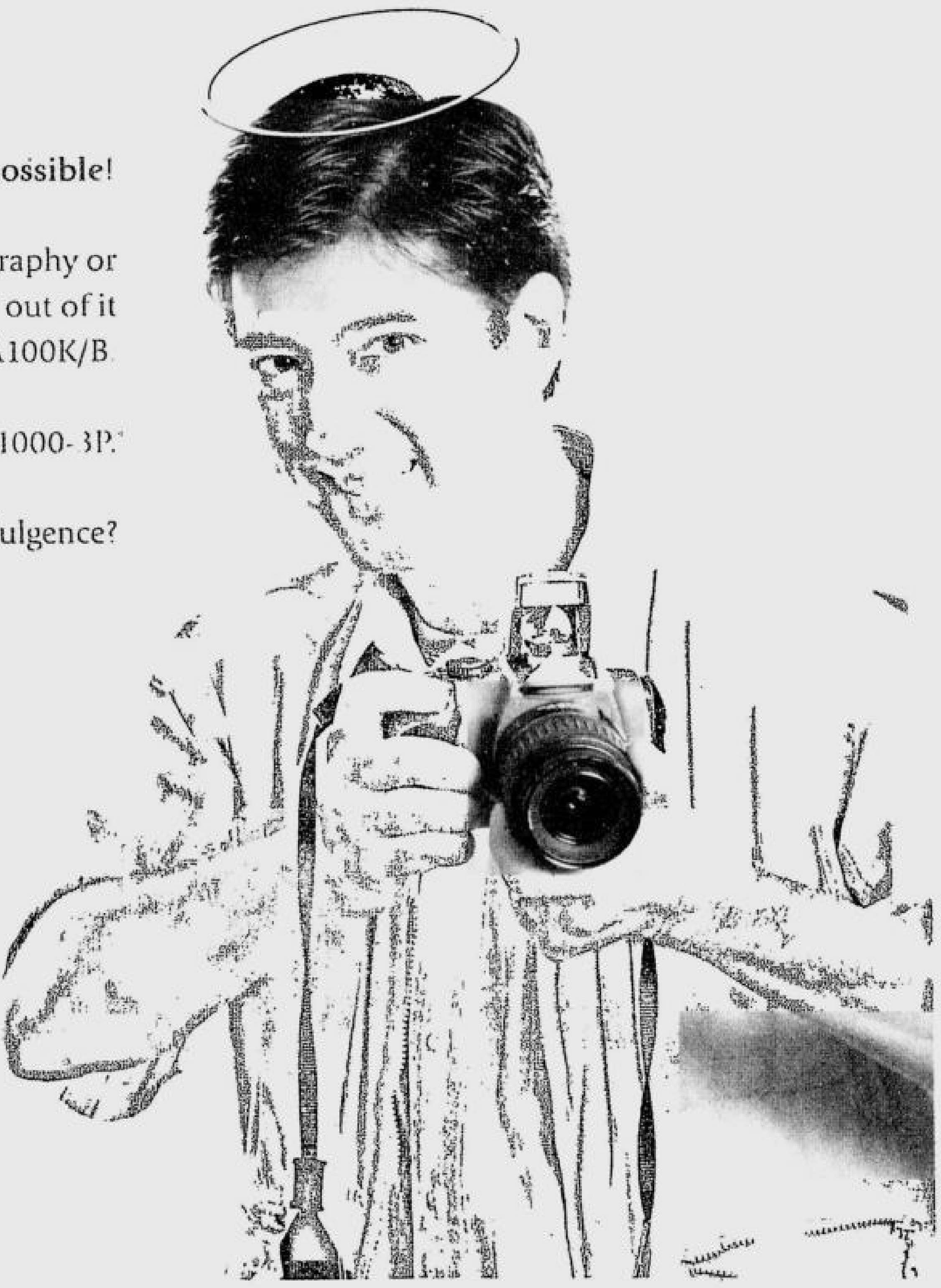
If you were not doing a show, who would you watch?

On Valentine's? I'd like to watch someone like Mishka Adams, or just go listen to some good jazz. I wouldn't want anything too loud or clangy. I'd like the music I hear to reflect a romantic mood.

Why should we watch your show?

Great music, great guest artists (Gian Magdangal and Jed Madela in Manila/Jon Joven and Jed in Cebu and Davao). That's the only reason to see a show. And I'm cute. *Ngyiiiiiik!*

Bayani San Diego Jr.



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Woman with a hundred voices

YESTERDAY

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

I WAS KNOWN AS the woman with a hundred voices," the silver-haired septuagenarian tells you with imperious confidence. "I was an all-around radio talent."

You're more than willing to take her word for it, but veteran radio star Laura Hermosa is not taking chances. In quick succession, she assumes the personas of a little boy, his female playmate, his mother, his grandmother ... and a cackling witch.

For a while there, she seems possessed. "I often played *Buruka*, the witch on 'Lola Basyang,'" she recounts.

For good measure, she plays the various characters and, in an illustration of virtuosity, makes them experience near-death by drowning, gunshot and stabbing.

So you see how, before becoming known as comedienne Tessie Tomas' mother, Laura made a name for herself as a seasoned radio talent and director.

First radio serial

At 22, she joined the radio biz in 1950, via dzBB. "I also worked in the old dzBC studio in Sta. Lucia, near Kalentong. I worked with (radio) director Artemio Marquez and (fellow voice talents) Ernesto Ramos, Luz Fernandez, Romy Reyes and Esther Chavez. Among my shows were 'Aklat ng Pag-Ibig' and 'Digmaan ng Damdamin.'"

For her first radio serial, where she voiced the heroine's mother, she was paid the princely sum of P10, "plus P5 for additional voices."

She was discovered by her teacher in Arellano High School in Sta. Cruz, Manila. "Mrs. Pedraza was a writer for the soap operas produced by the Philippine Manufacturing Company. She knew of my interest in acting; I had joined a lot of school programs."

After two years, she gave up radio because she had married lawyer Fernando Hermosa and moved to Catbalogan, Samar.

"I worked as a teacher in the province," she says. When they moved back to Manila, she resumed her career, working at dzXL (of the old CBN) in Intramuros. Among her popular programs was "Kahapon Lamang," anchored by Eddie Ilarde.

A pioneering working mom, she raised six children while doing radio shows—truly a balancing act, she notes. "Before reporting for work, I went to the market, cooked and did the laundry."

Laura also fetched her children from school. She remembers: "From Espiritu Santo, I took Tessie, who was 8 years old, to the station, where she did her homework. I asked my colleagues Helen Vela and Orly Punzalan to tutor her. Before I knew it, she was reading the scripts—in different voices!"

At 9, Tessie was hired to do voice work. "She played a little boy like Dennis the Menace, for P5 per script."

In 1964, Laura and Tessie were the models for Palmolive Soap. Tessie was 14.

"I also did voice work for radio commercials," Laura says. She was much-sought-after as talent for radio ads because of her proficiency in different dialects. "I was born in Dagupan, Pangasinan, but I studied in Manila and taught *balarila* (the National Language) in Samar."

WITH her famous daughter, comedienne Tessie Tomas.

To augment the family income, she went into buy-and-sell. "My friends called me 'the walking department store.' I would go to Clover Theater and Manila Grand Opera House and sell goods—watches, thermos bottles, chocolates, fruits—I had bought in Divisoria, Central Market and Baclaran to the dancers and singers," she relates. Among her *suki* were stage entertainers Chuchi and German Moreno.

In the 1970s, she moved to dwWW, where she shared the airlanes with Kuya Cesar, Rod Navarro, Vic Morales, Tina Loy and Inday Badiday. Later on, she took on directing jobs for P25 per script, handling shows like "Teenage Diary."

"Radio is a good training ground," Laura says. "TV and movie directors looked up to radio talents."

It was only a matter of time before she crossed over, becoming a frequent guest on TV shows like "Buhay Artista," "Nida-Nestor Show" and "John en Marsha" in the 1960s and 1970s. She says her favorite director was the late Ading Fernando.

Movies, too

She also did a handful of movies, including "Relasyon" in 1982, where she played Vilma Santos' aunt. In 1987, she became a regular on the Tito Sotto-Sandy Andolong sitcom on IBC 13, "Hapi House," where she played nanny to Aga Muhlach, Isabel Granada and Chuckie Dreyfuss.

"Aga was often late," Laura recalls. "I always reminded him of the importance of being professional."

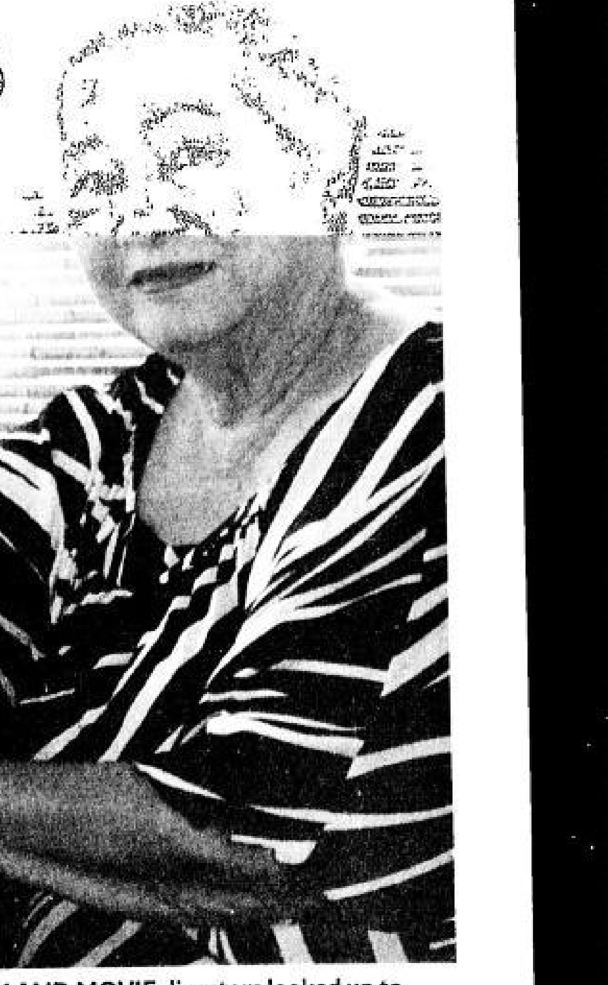
She took her role as mentor to younger talents seriously. These days, however, her most cherished role is that of *lola* to 14 grandchildren (including three great grandchildren).

At 78, she shows no signs of slowing down although, she insists, she retired eight years ago.

"She's still very hyper," daughter Tessie gushes. "She takes care of the farm in Catbalogan. She's also into real estate."

Laura asserts: "I knew I couldn't be in show biz forever. Thus, I was very frugal with my earnings. I taught my children: "It's not how much you earn, but how much you save, that will decide your future."

Before she was known as 'Teysi's mom,' Laura Hermosa was a big radio star & director



"TV AND MOVIE directors looked up to radio talents," Laura Hermosa says.

AS A MAINSTAY of IBC 13's "Hapi House," with, from left, Isabel Granada, Tito Sotto, Sandy Andolong, Aga Muhlach, and Chuckie Dreyfuss.

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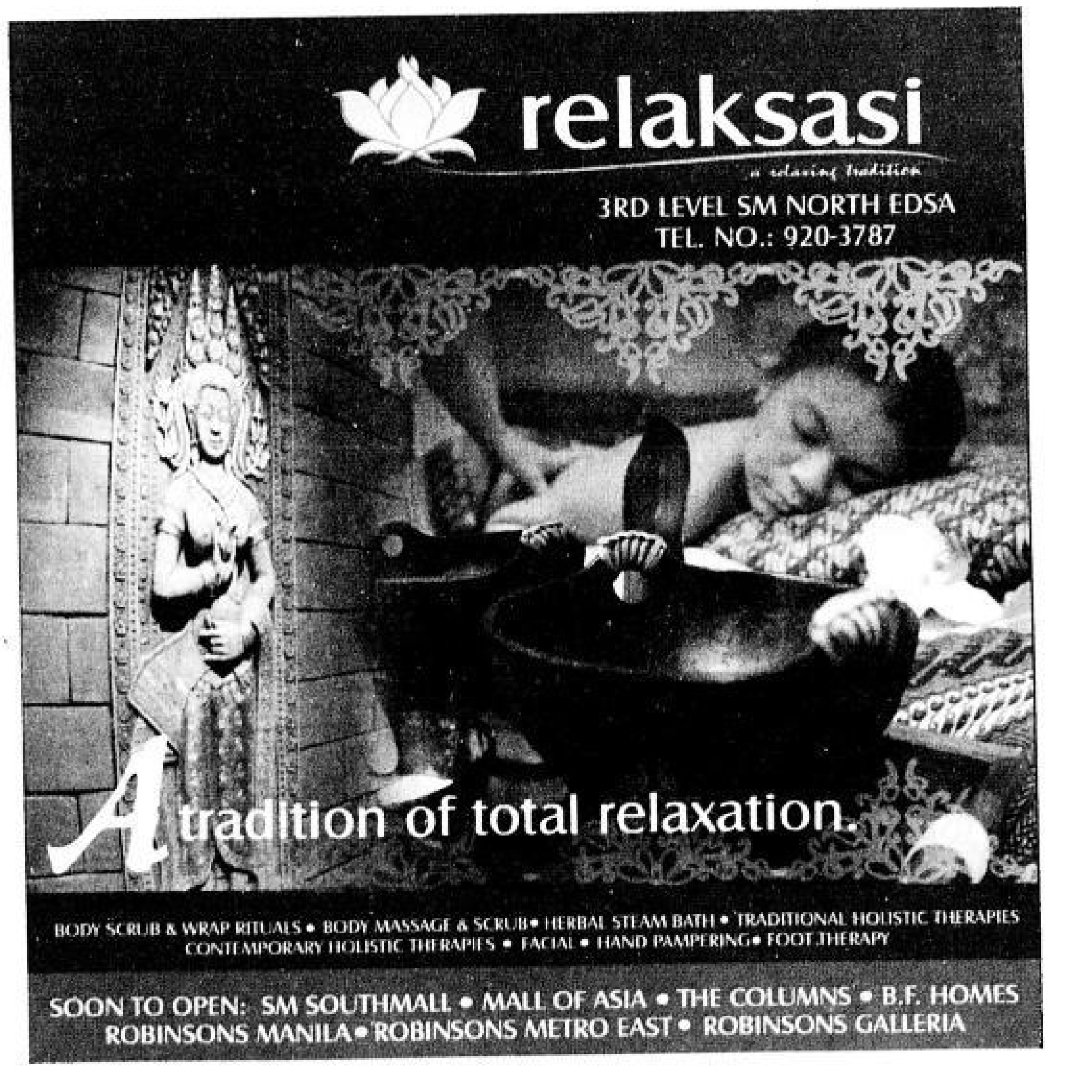

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KATRINA HALILI

What she does best

KATRINA HALILI knows exactly what she would do if she suddenly found time away from her busy schedule.

She is still doing "Atlantika" on GMA 7 and soon, a new series, "Lupin." She recently appeared in two movies, and is now the endorser of the casual clothes line Hang Ten.

So how would she spend a free week? "Go to the beach, relax and cook for family and friends."

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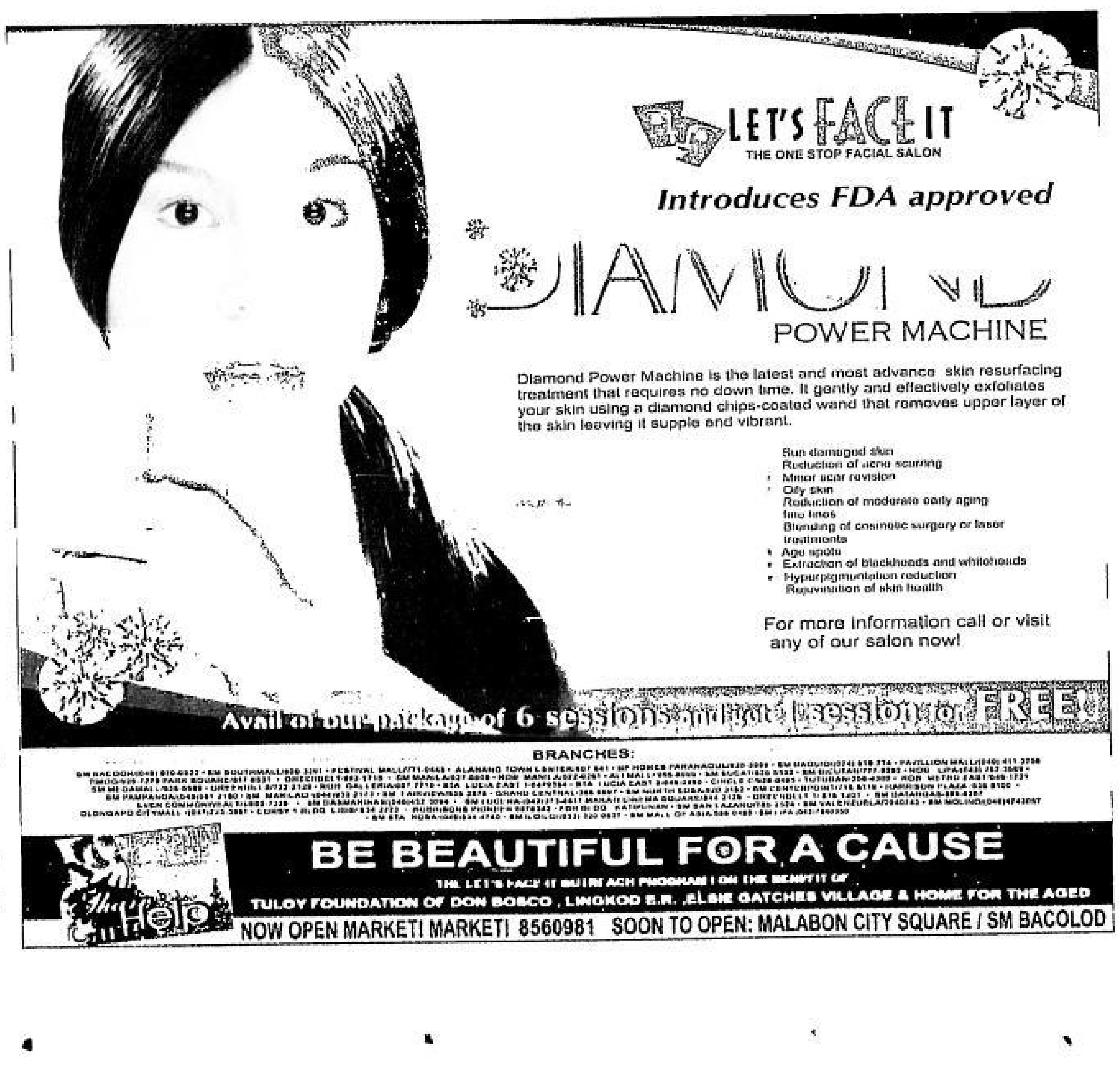

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1 DEJA VU • THX 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	6 SAW 3 12:00MF 2:30 5:00LMF
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	7 ERAGON 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
3 indieSine's Digital Cinema Bagong Agos Film Festival	8 BLOOD DIAMOND 12:40 3:40 6:40 9:40
4 BABEL 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00	9 ROB-B-HOOD 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
5 LITTLE CHILDREN 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00	10 AGENT X44 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
2 ROB-B-HOOD 12:00 2:50 SAW 3 5:20 7:35 9:50	5 LITTLE CHILDREN 12.00 2:30 5.00 7:30 10:00
3 BABEL 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	6 AGENT X44 12:30 2.50 5:10 7:30 10:00
4 DEJA VU 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00	7 BLOOD DIAMOND 12:00 2.40 ERAGON 5:30 7:45 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193- 682-8199

1 ROB-B-HOOD 1:10 3:40 6:20 9:00	5 SAW 3 12.50 2.50 4:50 6:50 9:00
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 1:15 3:50 6:25 9:00	6 LITTLE CHILDREN 12:00 3:00 6.00 9:00
3 AGENT X44 11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10	7 ERAGON 12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00
4 DEJA VU 12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00	8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

NOVALICHES 936-3231/ 935-3229-30

1 DEJA VU	3 AGENT X44
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	4 SAW 3

PIONEER 687-5378

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40	3 AGENT X44 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40
2 BABEL 11:40 2:30 5:20 8:10	4 LITTLE CHILDREN 11:40 2:30 5:20 8:10

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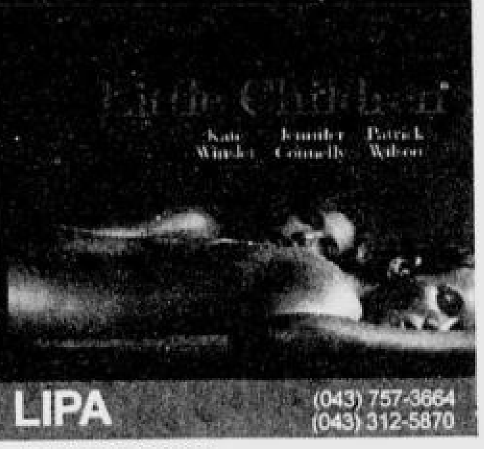

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2 SPIRIT TRAP
3 SAW 3
4 KAMASUTRA 3
5 AGENT X44

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2 AGENT X44
3 A GOOD YEAR
4 SPIRIT TRAP
5 SAW 3

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2 KAMASUTRA 3
3 SAW 3
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

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3 KAMASUTRA 3
4 A GOOD YEAR

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2 SAW 3
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 AGENT X44

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2 KAMASUTRA 3
3 AGENT X44
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 SAW 3
6 A GOOD YEAR

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2 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD 2
3 AGENT X44
4 DEJA VU
5 BORAT
6 SAW 3

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4 DEJA VU
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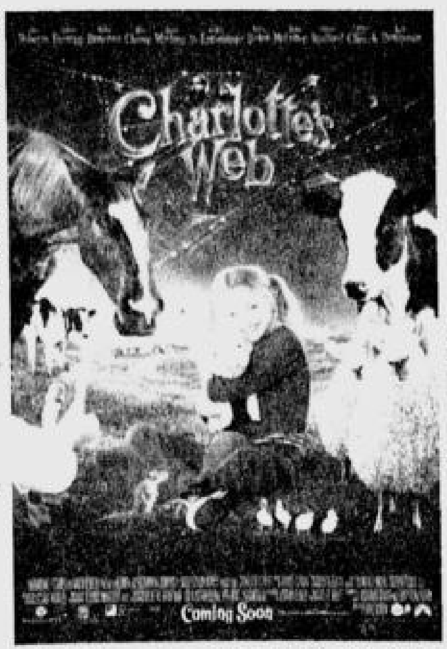

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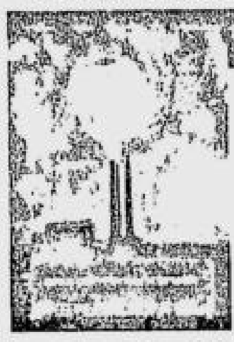

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ROUNDUP

Love trip

A COUPLE LEAVES behind their prairie hometown and relatives, heads west and starts a family of their own in this adaptation of Jannette Oke's novel, "Love's Long Journey." Airing Feb. 12, 10 p.m. on Hallmark Channel.

On Feb. 13 at 10 p.m., also on Hallmark, is "For One Night," about a teenager campaigning for a single integrated prom.

Discounts

THE PENINSULA Manila's "Fly High With Peter Pan!" promo offers discounts to the hit musical "Peter Pan" for guests availing of the one-night package Fridays to Sundays until Feb. 4.

Tickets to the musical reserved through the hotel will be charged within 10 hours of booking. Call 887-2888.

China series

NATIONAL GEOgraphic Channel (NGC) ushers in the Year of the Pig with a special series of Chinese features: on Feb. 17, 9 p.m., "Secrets of The First Emperor"; 10 p.m., "Inside: Hong Kong's Big Bang"; 11 p.m., "Kung Fu Killers"; Feb. 18, 9 p.m., "Inside The Forbidden City"; 11 p.m., "MegaBridges: China."

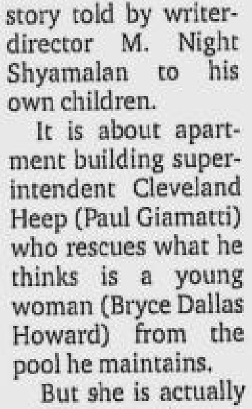
NOW ON DISC

M. Night's 'Lady'

NOW AVAILABLE ON video is "Lady in the Water," based on a story told by writer-director M. Night Shyamalan to his own children.

It is about apartment building superintendent Cleveland Heep (Paul Giamatti) who rescues what he thinks is a young woman (Bryce Dallas Howard) from the pool he maintains.

But she is actually a character from a bedtime story, trying to go back home.

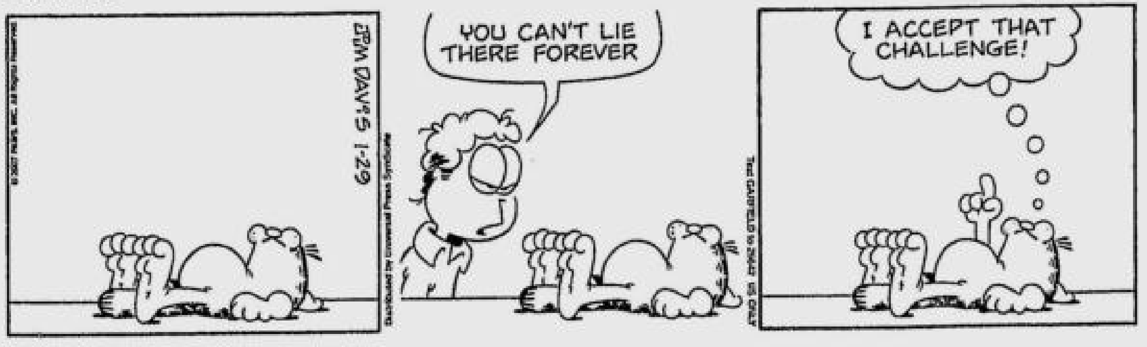


'The Grudge 2'

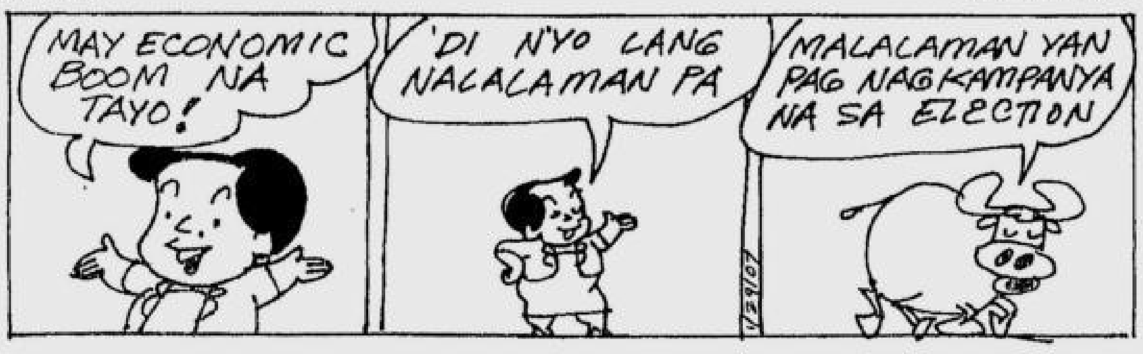
ALSO AVAILABLE on DVD and VCD is "The Grudge 2," sequel to the 2004 hit horror movie.

Takashi Shimizu pens and directs Amber Tamblyn, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Edison Chen, Arielle Kebbell and Matthew Knight.

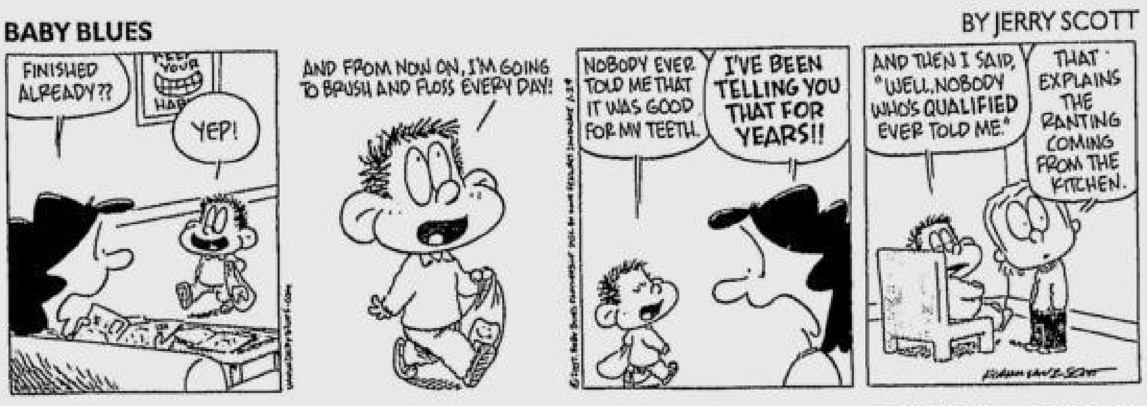
GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS


JIM DAVIS 1-29
YOU CAN'T LIE THERE FOREVER
I ACCEPT THAT CHALLENGE!

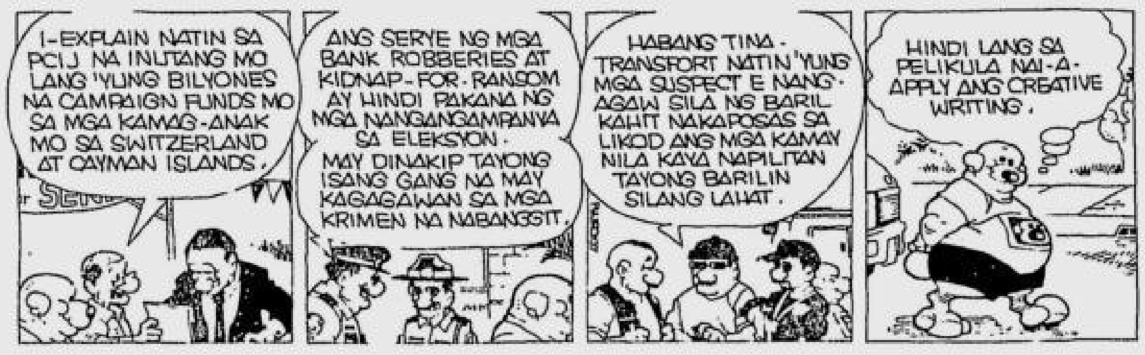
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


MAY ECONOMIC BOOM NA TAYO!
'DI N'YO LANG NALALAMAN PA
MALALAMAN YAN PAG NAGKAMPANYA NA SA ELECTION
1/29/07

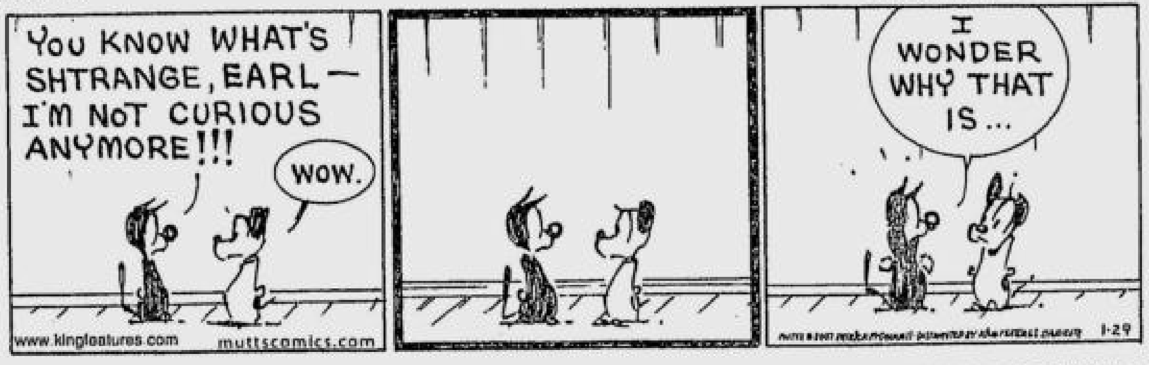
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


FINISHED ALREADY??
KEEP YOUR
YEP!
AND FROM NOW ON, I'M GOING TO BRUSH AND FLOSS EVERY DAY!
NOBODY EVER TOLD ME THAT IT WAS GOOD FOR MY TEETH.
I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU THAT FOR YEARS!!
AND THEN I SAID, "WELL, NOBODY WHO'S QUALIFIED EVER TOLD ME."
THAT EXPLAINS THE RANTING COMING FROM THE KITCHEN.

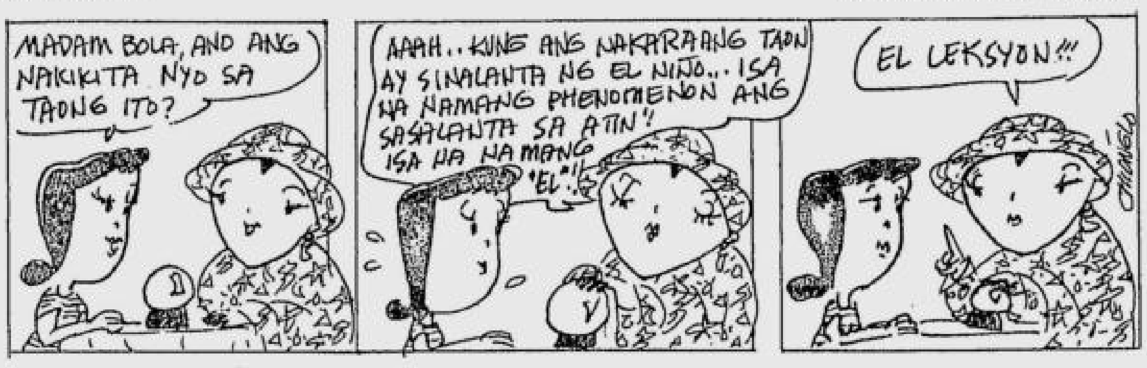
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


I-EXPLAIN NATIN SA PCIJ NA INUTANG MO LANG 'YUNG BILYONES NA CAMPAIGN FUNDS MO SA MGA KAMAG-ANAK MO SA SWITZERLAND AT CAYMAN ISLANDS.
ANG SERYE NG MGA BANK ROBBERIES AT KIDNAP-FOR-RANSOM AY HINDI PAKANA NG MGA NANGANGAMPANYA SA ELEKSYON.
MAY DINAKIP TAYONG ISANG GANG NA MAY KAGAGAWAN SA MGA KRIMEN NA NABANGGIT.
HABANG TINA-TRANSPORT NATIN 'YUNG MGA SUSPECT E NANG-AGAW SILA NG BARIL KAHIT NAKAPOSAS SA LIKOD ANG MGA KAMAY NILA KAYA NAPILITAN TAYONG BARILIN SILANG LAHAT.
HINDI LANG SA PELIKULA NAI-A-APPLY ANG CREATIVE WRITING.

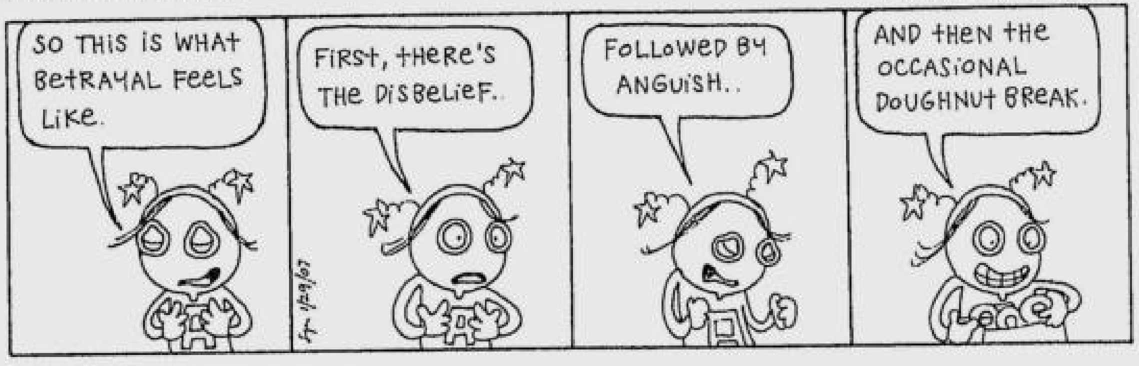
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


YOU KNOW WHAT'S SHTRANGE, EARL — I'M NOT CURIOUS ANYMORE!!!
WOW.
I WONDER WHY THAT IS...
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
1-29

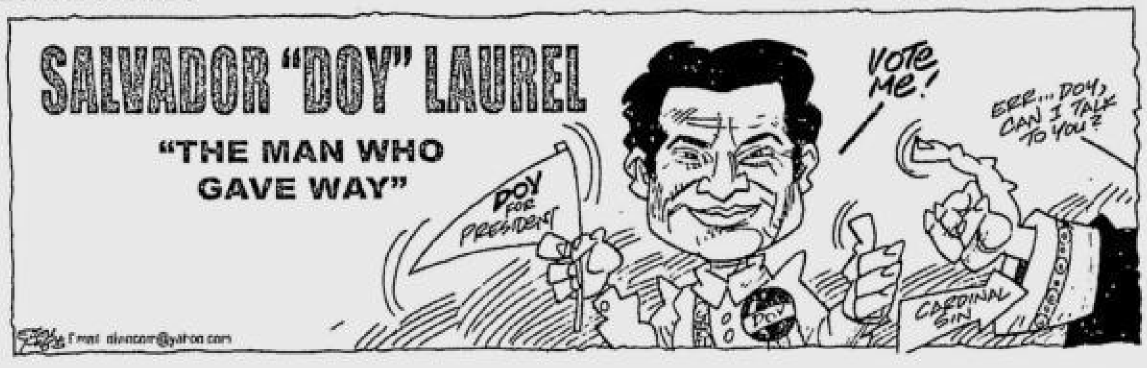
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MADAM BOLA, ANO ANG NAKIKITA NYO SA TAONG ITO?
AAAH.. KUNG ANG NAKARAANG TAON AY SINALANTA NG EL NIÑO... ISA NA NAMANG PHENOMENON ANG SASALANTA SA ATIN'! ISA NA NAMANG "EL"!
EL LEKSYON!!!
CHIONGLO

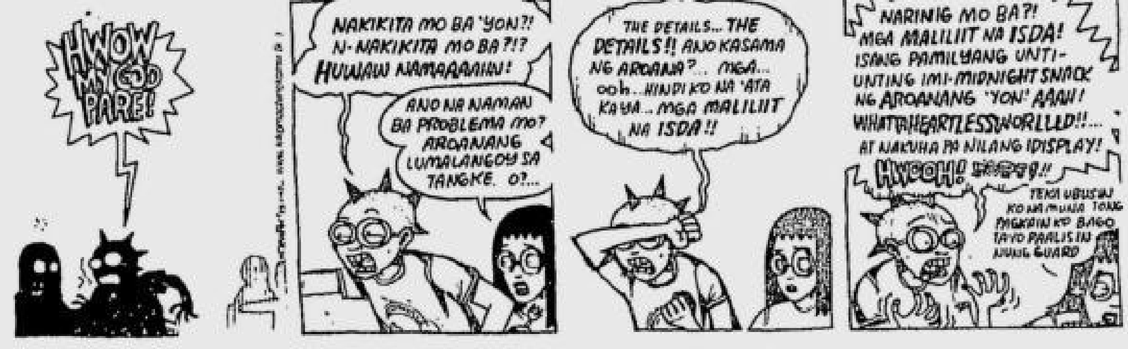
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SO THIS IS WHAT BETRAYAL FEELS LIKE.
FIRST, THERE'S THE DISBELIEF.
FOLLOWED BY ANGUISH..
AND THEN THE OCCASIONAL DOUGHNUT BREAK.
1/29/07

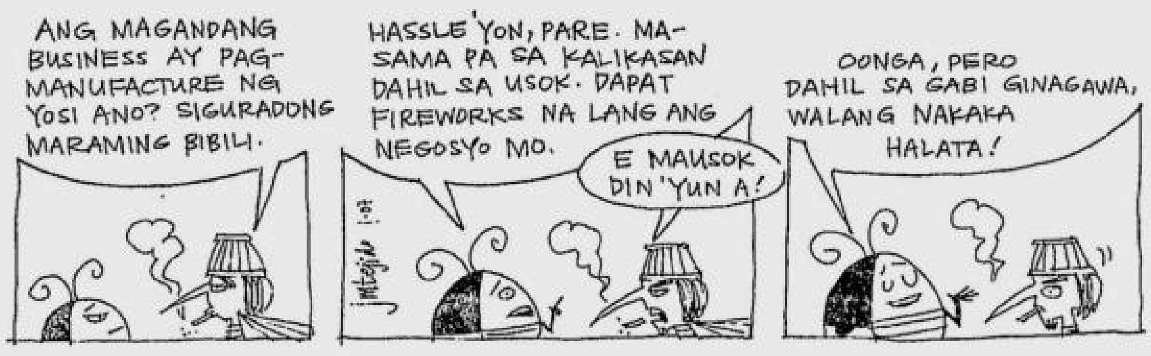
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SALVADOR "DOY" LAUREL
"THE MAN WHO GAVE WAY"
VOTE ME!
DOY FOR PRESIDENT
DOY
ERR... DOY, CAN I TALK TO YOU?
CARDINAL SIN

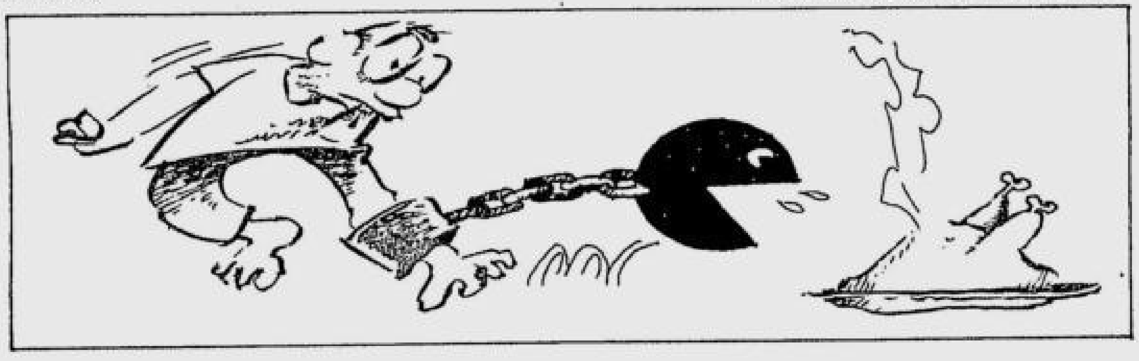
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOW MY GOD PARE!
NAKIKITA MO BA 'YON?! N-NAKIKITA MO BA?!? HUWAW NAMARAAAIN!
ANO NA NAMAN BA PROBLEMA MO? AROANANG LUMALANGOY SA TANGKE. O?...
THE DETAILS... THE DETAILS!! ANO KASAMA NG AROANA?.. MGA... ooh.. HINDI KO NA 'ATA KAYA.. MGA MALILIIT NA ISDA!!
NARINIG MO BA?! MGA MALILIIT NA ISDA! ISANG PAMILYANG UNTI-UNTING IMI-MIDNIGHT SNACK NG AROANANG 'YON' AAAH! WHATAHEARTLESSWORLLLD!!... AT NAKUHA PA NILANG IDISPLAY!
HWOOH!
TEKA UBUSIN KO NA MUNA TONG PAGKAIN KO BAGO TAYO PAALISIN NUNG GUARD

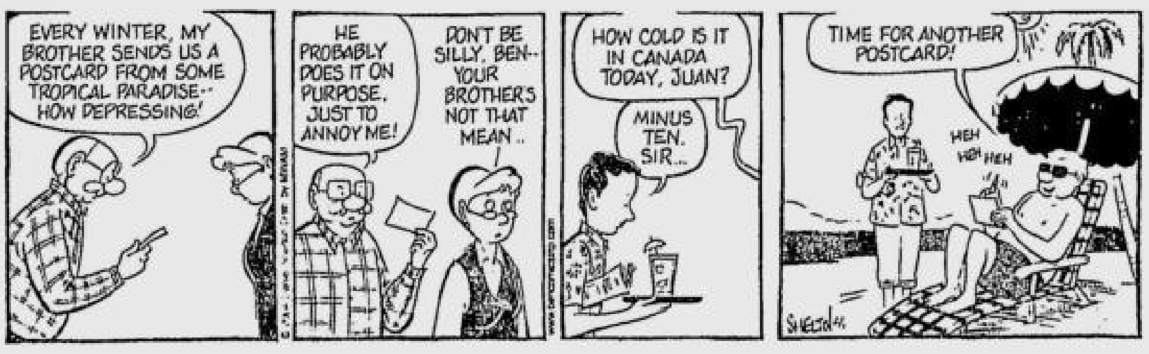
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG MAGANDANG BUSINESS AY PAG-MANUFACTURE NG YOSI ANO? SIGURADONG MARAMING BIBILI.
HASSLE 'YON, PARE. MA-SAMA PA SA KALIKASAN DAHIL SA USOK. DAPAT FIREWORKS NA LANG ANG NEGOSYO MO.
E MAUSOK DIN 'YUN A!
OONGA, PERO DAHIL SA GABI GINAGAWA, WALANG NAKAKA HALATA!
jmtejido

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


EVERY WINTER, MY BROTHER SENDS US A POSTCARD FROM SOME TROPICAL PARADISE-- HOW DEPRESSING!
HE PROBABLY DOES IT ON PURPOSE, JUST TO ANNOY ME!
DON'T BE SILLY, BEN-- YOUR BROTHER'S NOT THAT MEAN..
HOW COLD IS IT IN CANADA TODAY, JUAN?
MINUS TEN, SIR...
TIME FOR ANOTHER POSTCARD!
HEH HEH HEH
SHELTON

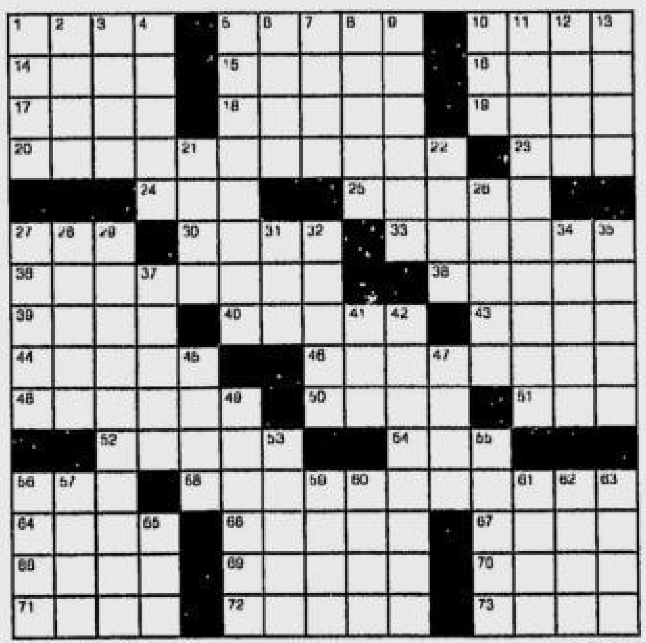
DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Took wing
5 French fathers
10 Score-producing stats
14 Overhaul
15 To any extent
16 Blunders
17 Of all time
18 Cunning
19 Carson's predecessor
20 Element 99
23 Stanford-Binet figs.
24 Slugger Williams
25 Wood finish
27 Piece of luggage
30 Unwaking state
33 Orion's occupation
36 Tradeoff
38 "Foreign Affairs" author
39 Horne or Olin
40 Below, to bards
43 Brings to court
44 Overused
46 Former name of Zimbabwe
48 Dollar bill artist
50 Weighty book
51 Pull along
52 Bumped off
54 Santa's helper
56 Independence Day mo.
58 Steerable bomb, e.g.
64 Resting on
66 Pocatello spot
67 Count (on)
68 City on the Brazos River
69 Mall river
70 Pills and such, for short
71 Mayflower, for one
72 Language of Homer
73 __-Ball (carnival game)

DOWN

1 Complimentary
2 Jeans purveyor Strauss
3 First lady's first home
4 Most inferior
5 Computer key
6 Needle case
7 Wet forecast
8 Perry of fashion
9 Clue collector
10 Bodybuilder's unit
11 Advisory group
12 Mesopotamia, today
13 States under J. Stalin
21 Gumshoes
22 Heavy hammer
26 Occupied
27 Big swigs
28 Ward off
29 Guardian spirit of a place
31 Actress West
32 Separately
34 MacDonald's refrain
35 Viewed again
37 Birth-related
41 However, briefly
42 Reading assignment, perhaps
45 Periods
47 Proofreader's notation
49 Art of pace
53 Rock bottom
55 Cultivates
56 Spielberg film
57 Beehive State
59 Craze
60 Fare-__-well
61 Brief look
62 Shoppe sign word
63 Wall St. letters
65 Soft drink



By Barry Silk
McLean, VA

1/29/07

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	P	U	R	G	E	■	S	C	O	O	T	E	R	S
P	I	N	E	A	L	■	P	L	A	C	E	M	A	T
E	N	C	A	G	E	■	R	O	T	A	T	I	V	E
C	O	L	L	E	C	T	I	V	E	S	■	T	I	E
I	C	E	■	■	T	A	T	E	R	■	S	T	O	P
E	L	A	S	T	O	M	E	R	S	■	T	E	L	L
S	E	N	H	O	R	E	S	■	■	E	Y	D	I	E
■	■	■	R	U	S	S	■	S	C	A	M	■	■	■
W	R	Y	E	R	■	■	C	O	R	R	I	D	O	R
R	E	A	D	■	S	H	O	R	E	L	E	A	V	E
A	M	O	S	■	P	O	R	E	D	■	■	C	E	N
S	O	U	■	H	A	R	P	S	I	C	H	O	R	D
S	U	N	B	U	R	N	S	■	B	R	U	I	S	E
E	N	D	O	R	S	E	E	■	L	E	T	T	E	R
S	T	E	A	L	E	R	S	■	Y	E	S	S	E	S

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1/29/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're courageous, and you're a do-gooder. You want to make the world a better place. Because of this, you always fight injustice. However, you're also fun-loving, playful and highly social. People love you! You're tolerant, and yet you make snap decisions. You hate to be bored. In the year ahead, an important choice faces you. Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: Oprah Winfrey, TV host; Jonny Lang, guitarist; Tom Selleck, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Remember to be sociable at this time, because your popularity rating can be very high if you're open to seeing others. People want to know what you think about things.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): If you're asked to take on increased responsibilities for something, then do it. You won't have to do anything special to shine at the job. (Trust me.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): By nature, you're a curious person. But right now, you're really curious! Therefore, do anything different that allows you to learn something new and expand your horizons

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Don't be alarmed if you feel unusually intense about absolutely everything lately. It's in the stars. This can improve love relationships; yet at the same time make arguments more intense!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Partnerships and close relationships are definitely your strong focus at this time. You can learn more about yourself through these one-on-one encounters with others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Since you have a desire to get better organized, act while you have this urge. Reduce the clutter in your life both at work and at home.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is your turn to play. Take a vacation. Make social plans. Enjoy playful activities with children. Put yourself first and have fun!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Home, family and real estate matters are your primary concern at this time. Do whatever you can to smooth relations within the family. Make your home prettier, too.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Short trips, errands, increased time spent with siblings plus increased reading and writing are some of the reasons you're busy right now. Just keep up the pace. Don't sit at home

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's totally appropriate right now for you to think about what it is that really makes you happy. It's important to know this. How else will you know what to aim for?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is the time of year when you can recharge your batteries for the rest of the year. Put yourself first now. You owe it to yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): At this time, you are best served by working behind the scenes or working alone. Keep your head down and your powder dry. If possible, get more rest; you need it.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			8		2	3		
		1				8		
	2	9		6		1	7	4
1				3				2
		7	9		8	5		
9				5				7
4	8	5		7		2	6	
		2				9		
		6	4		5			

Difficulty Level ★

1/29

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	7	3	8	4	6	1	2	9
1	4	9	5	2	3	8	6	7
8	2	6	7	1	9	5	4	3
7	9	5	1	6	4	3	8	2
6	1	2	3	8	5	9	7	4
4	3	8	9	7	2	6	1	5
9	6	7	4	3	8	2	5	1
3	8	1	2	5	7	4	9	6
2	5	4	6	9	1	7	3	8

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Buboy and Buching, a love story

BUCHING STOOD UP IN THE MIDDLE OF the room, looking for Buboy. He promised he would come and watch her school performance. He didn't show up.

"Since then, I have always found time to attend all her school activities," says Buboy, a.k.a. Cesar Montano, award-winning actor. To his long list of credits, he has proudly added, "hands-on dad."

CESAR Montano and daughter Angelina

"Buching" is the nickname of his and wife Sunshine's 5-year-old daughter Angelina.

Buboy makes sure he and Buching spend quality time alone. "Like, when I drive her to and from school, I teach her simple things, like fastening her seat belt. This way, our time together is productive and memorable."

He believes in the value of such bonding, Cesar says. "I myself remember the fun I had with my father when I was a kid."

Given that Buboy is also a movie star, Buching sees him as more than a regular dad. A teacher asked her one day whom she considered a hero. The girl said, "My dad—he fights bad guys."

Cesar likes that. "I want her to be secure in the thought that I'm always there for her, that I'll always take her side."

RUSHES

Boys have to wait

"It's not my fault that I'm beautiful," says Jackie Rice, referring to a string of rumored suitors who are at least 10 years older than herself.

The 16-year-old female winner in last season's "Starstruck," GMA 7's reality talent search, has been linked to Biboy Ramirez, Mark Lapid, and even former child star Nino Muhlach.

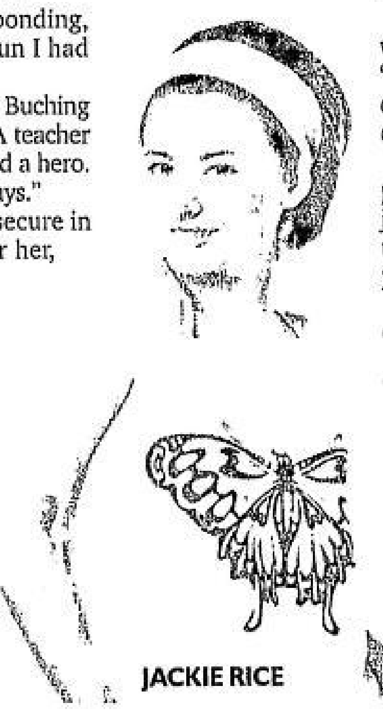
But Rice says interested parties just have to wait until she comes of age.

She has also realized that she's too young to go drinking in bars, which she did five months ago, causing her two-month suspension from the network.

"That will not happen again," Rice vows. "I went out just that once with the cast of 'Love2Love,' to this bar in Makati." She got drunk on a single bottle of Red Horse, she recalls. "My Dad was fuming mad."

The resulting publicity caused her more problems, including loss of income from projects. "Since then, I've been accused of doing things that I never did," she says. "I hope this year will be better for me."

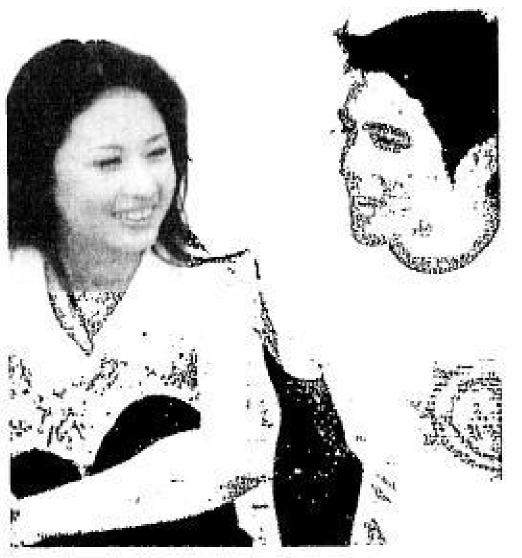
Now cast in the afternoon drama "Princess Charming," Rice still has to prove that she has truly shed the bad girl image. "I've stopped being affected by nasty talk," she says. "The truth will always come out." *Nini Valera*


JACKIE RICE

Beauty between 'em

Is it true that LJ Reyes and Alfred Vargas are on the verge of splitting up? There's talk that a Malaysian beauty queen has come between them—Carrie Lee, who is in the cast of GMA 7's "Muli."

Alfred and Carrie worked together on location in Malaysia for a month, and then continued taping here.


CARRIE Lee and Alfred Vargas

Hollywood politics

LOS ANGELES—Actress Elizabeth Taylor announced she would donate $2,300, the legal limit, to Sen. Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

Thursday's announcement came amid speculation about whether Hollywood will embrace the Democratic New York senator as much as it did her husband, former President Bill Clinton.

"I like the way she thinks," Taylor said of her candidate. "She is very savvy ... with years of experience in government, diplomacy and politics."

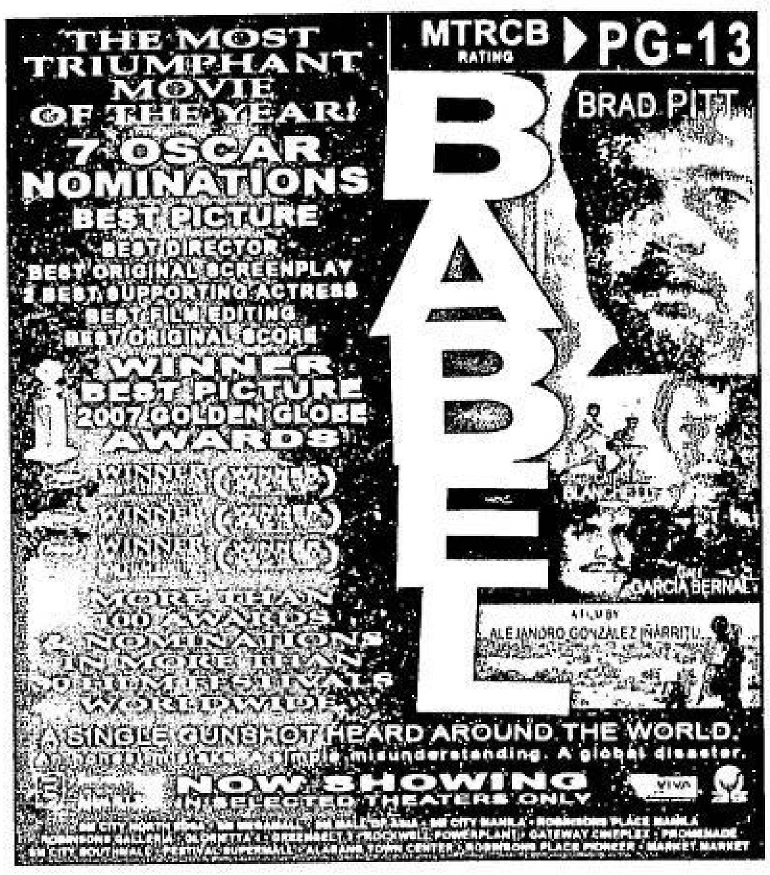
DreamWorks movie studio partners Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen are throwing a fundraiser next month for a Clinton rival, Sen. Barack Obama, an Illinois Democrat. *AP*

A lift from Brad

LOS ANGELES—Cate Blanchett is logging lots of travel time these days. Luckily, she's been able to catch a lift from New Orleans to Los Angeles on Brad Pitt's plane.

The "Babel" co-stars are working together in the Big Easy on "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," and both are making frequent trips to LA on account of Hollywood's awards season.

But the sprawling, international drama, "Babel," which won the Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture Drama, isn't the only film bringing Blanchett back to Southern California. She also stars in "Notes on a Scandal," which earned Judi Dench a Best Actress Golden Globe and garnered Blanchett a Supporting Actress nod. They have also earned Oscar nominations for the movie. *AP*


THE MOST TRIUMPHANT MOVIE OF THE YEAR!
7 OSCAR NOMINATIONS
BEST PICTURE
BEST DIRECTOR
BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY
2 BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
BEST FILM EDITING
BEST ORIGINAL SCORE
WINNER BEST PICTURE 2007 GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS
MORE THAN 100 AWARDS & NOMINATIONS IN MORE THAN 10 FILM FESTIVALS WORLDWIDE
MTRCB RATING PG-13
BRAD PITT
BABEL
GARCIA BERNAL
A FILM BY ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ IÑARRITU
A SINGLE GUNSHOT HEARD AROUND THE WORLD.
An honest mistake. A simple misunderstanding. A global disaster.
NOW SHOWING IN SELECTED THEATERS ONLY
SM CITY NORTH EDSA · SM MEGAMALL · SM MALL OF ASIA · SM CITY MANILA · ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA
ROBINSONS GALLERIA · GLORIETTA 4 · GREENBELT 3 · ROCKWELL POWERPLANT · GATEWAY CINEPLEX · PROMENADE
SM CITY SOUTHMALL · FESTIVAL SUPERMALL · ALABANG TOWN CENTER · ROBINSONS PLACE PIONEER · MARKET MARKET
VIVA

SHOWING TOMORROW!
BAGONG AGOS FILM FESTIVAL
Last Day Tomorrow
CLOSING FILM
Mike Sandejas' TULAD NG DATI
TOMORROW at 9PM!
TOMORROW!
SARONGBAGGI
by Emman Del Cruz 1:30PM!
MANORO
by Brillante Mendoza at 4PM!
IN DA RED CORNER
by Dado Lumibao at 6:30PM!
ONLY AT indieSine, Robinsons Galleria!

love ko 'to
Globe
ALASKA
SONY
ABS-CBN
PROUDLY PRESENT
Sharon
MYMEGAVALENTINETWO
SPECIAL GUESTS
APO HIKING SOCIETY
POPS FERNANDEZ
MUSIC DIRECTOR
LOUIE J. OCAMPO
DIRECTOR
JOHNNY MANAHAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON DE LEON
COURTESY OF PHILIPPINE TATLER
FEBRUARY 10 ARANETA COLISEUM 8PM
SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT
bench/
Flowers & Butterflies Catering & Events Coordinator
96.3 WRocK
IFM 93.9
CROWNE PLAZA GALLERIA MANILA THE PLACE TO MEET.
AQUA health
VS&F
TICKETNET CALL 911-5555 www.ticketnet.com.ph
ARANETA COLISEUM www.aranetacoliseum.com
artist house

Microsoft ushers in the Digital Lifestyle and Workstyle

Microsoft has long been committed to supporting the needs of businesses with innovative technology and resources to help drive their success

2004 marked the year that the digital lifestyle truly entered the mainstream, driven largely by the power and the versatility of Microsoft software and the Windows platform. Evidence includes Windows Media Center PCs, which surpassed 1 million in sales during 2004, and new devices and services that help take complexity and uncertainty out of digital media, making it easier for consumers to play the digital audio and video they want.

Microsoft products and technologies are making it dramatically easier to create devices and software that work together seamlessly. It is now easier than ever for people to access favorite TV shows, photos, music and video on a wide range of devices.

One key to Microsoft's success has been its focused innovation to enable people to fulfill their passions in music, gadgets, work, and family. There are now new devices and software developed by Microsoft and its partners over the years that are providing consumers and businesses with a wide range of new experiences.

Microsoft has long been committed to supporting the needs of businesses with innovative technology and resources to help drive their success. Businesses are an essential part of local economies. It is responsible for the creation of new jobs worldwide. There are more than 20 million small and home-based businesses and many of those do not have the tools they need to compete in a world that depends so much on technology, globalization and mobile productivity.

"As the market continues to grow, business owners are looking for new, affordable ways to get organized, to give their employees the right tools to get the job done and to grow their customer base," said Antonio Javier, Jr., Managing Director, Microsoft Philippines. "With the responsibilities of running a business, many entrepreneurs are simply looking for technology that doesn't take too much time out of their day, that fits well within their organization and that helps them do more with less".

But even more important than the sheer number of innovative new products is Microsoft's continued emphasis on breaking down the barriers between software and devices so that people can enjoy and share digital media experiences in ways that suit the way they live.

This year, Microsoft is set to unveil a new wave of products that will completely revolutionize the computing experience.

"As we continue to develop great products, people can anticipate better integration across a wider range of devices and services, and more personalization in ways that matter most to them, so that people may be able to realize their full potential and live out their passions with Microsoft technology," Javier said.

An Eye Doctor Who's Always on the Lookout for a Better Way

How Microsoft Office Empowers One of the Country's Heroes for Health

"I had gotten used to it - being at the morgue in the middle of the night, surreptitiously harvesting corneas for use during class. Then one night, I miscalculated my step and found myself buried under a dead body. I thought, 'there has got to be a better way than this'."

The image of this beauteous lady under a cadaver is hard to imagine but it was an all-too-real situation that she found herself in as a medical intern at the University of Sto. Tomas that was a stroke of luck for thousands of Filipinos today. On that night, Dominga "Minguita" Padilla planted a seed in her mind that has grown to become what is now known as the Eye Bank Foundation of the Philippines (EBFP).

"Anyone can become corneally blind at any given time - it can be by your eye accidentally being hit by a tree branch or a piece of glass shard or maybe getting an eye infection from a dirty contact lens. Although patients are usually the young and poor, all who suffer from corneal blindness equally wait in the dark indefinitely due to the lack of precious corneal tissue," said Dra. Padilla.

The quest to address avoidable blindness is the motivation behind EBFP, which Dra. Padilla and a group of physicians founded in 1994. Their mission was to make high quality, transplantable eye tissue available and accessible to all who needed corneal transplantation in the Philippines, especially those who could least afford this sight-restoring surgery. Their vision was that one day, corneal transplants could be scheduled whenever and wherever it was necessary, so that all those who needed it would no longer be subject to the indefinite and futile waiting that characterized corneal blindness in the past.

Today, 10 years hence, surgeons know that all they have to do is call the Eye Bank and they will be sure to have their corneal tissue within an average of two to three months (the average waiting time today for corneal tissue worldwide). Patients also no longer need to come to Manila just to have their transplants since the Eye Bank sends its tissue free of charge to the different surgeons throughout the country who request for them, with the help of sponsor airlines and couriers.

The Eye Bank is now considered a leader among eye banks in the world and has received various awards and citations both in the Philippines and abroad for its life changing work. Aside from making sight restoring corneal transplants available and accessible to people from all walks of life, the Eye Bank facilitates research, is a training center for eye banking, and also undertakes information campaigns on eye health and corneal and eye donation.

"The efforts to address the problem of blindness in the Philippines over the years have paid off; thanks to the cooperation between the various stakeholders in public health ophthalmology and to a large part to the collective efforts of the members of the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology who have kept true to their mission of alleviating blindness among our countrymen," added Dra. Padilla.

Aside from heading the Eye Bank, Dra. Padilla serves as the current President of the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology. Her contribution to the advancement of Philippine ophthalmology has earned numerous citations for Dra. Padilla. She is a Centennial Awardee for Community Service of the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, a recipient of the Centennial Commission of the Feminist Movement on the Philippines' "Kayamanan ng Bansa" Award, Pfizer Philippines' "Heroes of Health" Award, Jesus Tamesis Community Service Award, and the Tissue Banks International/International Federation of Eye Banks' "Outstanding Achievement in Sight Restoration to the Corneally Blind" Award.

As if that was not enough, Dra. Padilla is also an advocate of good governance, being the founding president of SINAG ng Bayan Foundation, a people's crusade for Good Governance, and the spokesperson for the Be Not Afraid Movement. In November 2005, she was also elected president of the Drug Abuse Research Foundation, an organization dedicated to the rehabilitation of drug dependents.

How does Dra. Padilla find time to do all these, while staying happily married to husband and fellow ophthalmic surgeon, Dr. Victor Lopez, and attending to her patients?

"I always look for better - and easier - ways to do things. Technology has been a boon to me, I think of it as a tool that will help me," said Dra. Padilla.

True enough, Dra. Padilla is always with her mobile phone and she easily gives out her number and gets the numbers of people she meets. Although she has yet to use a PDA phone, restricting her phone use to text messages and calls, Dra. Padilla is a whiz at the computer, especially with Microsoft Office programs.

"Nothing makes an impact more than visuals. I use Microsoft PowerPoint when I make presentations to potential Eye Bank partners. It's easy to insert photos and make changes in my laptop while on the road, to customize presentations depending on the audience," she describes. "For medical conferences, we use Media Player to view the latest in eye surgery procedures."

PowerPoint 2003 is the Microsoft Office presentation graphics program which allows users to create an impact in person or online. PowerPoint 2003 integrates with Windows Media Player to play streaming audio and video within a slide show.

Dra. Padilla also rattles off the other Microsoft Office programs she is constantly using, a tell-tale sign of her affinity for technology, especially impressive when compared to people who are not consciously aware of the software they use or, much less, have opened their hearts and minds to using computers.

"I use Word 2003 to write and edit my papers, letters and press releases. Outlook 2003 (the personal information manager and communication program) allows me to manage e-mail, calendars, contacts, and other personal and team information. My favorites in this enhanced Outlook are the features of automatic grouping of messages, junk mail handling, and improved reading views. They are very, very useful to someone like me who gets so much e-mail," Dra. Padilla shares.

Ferdie Macatangay, Product Manager for Microsoft Office, Microsoft Philippines confirms Dra. Padilla's tech-savviness: "Dra. Padilla is a wonderful example of how Microsoft Office enables people to do more. Similar to how she and the Eye Bank have affected the cause of corneal blindness in the Philippines, Microsoft Office has created a revolution on how individuals and teams create and communicate. As brought to the ideal by Dra. Padilla, Office has evolved from a suite of personal productivity products to a more comprehensive and integrated system that empowers. Mainly, our goal is to improve individual productivity in increasingly demanding environments."

Dra. Padilla has so embraced the digital workstyle that she has also created a "paperless" clinic. All the records of her patients are digitally stored and accessible through a database system based on Microsoft .NET technology.

"Once a patient comes in, my assistant accesses the record for my viewing and I update it during the consultation. Prescriptions are no longer written but instead printed out, making it more accurate and safe for the patient," she explains.

The doctor simply found better ways to do things.

"I am proud to be so adept at computers and Microsoft software. No matter how good you think you are, there is always room for improvement. I like that about Microsoft, that there are always upgrades and next generation versions. I actually can't wait for Windows Vista and Microsoft Office 2007," enthuses Dra. Padilla.

Padilla believes that technology has created a revolution on how individuals and teams create and communicate.

Illac Diaz: Using Technology to Ignite Social Change

Imagine having to manage a 400- and two 100-bedroom dorms for seafarers in three different locations while raising funds for home and school-building projects in rural areas, and promoting new tools that have the power to ease the manual labor of farmers and multinationals, you'd think it could not be done. These are the things that, perhaps, only a fictional superhero could do, but one person has mastered the craft of juggling a number of benevolent efforts and managing to succeed in helping thousands of people along the way.

With technology as his tool, 34-year-old Illac Diaz pioneers a new breed of Filipino social entrepreneurs who combine business savvy with social responsibility. Having just completed a research fellowship in the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Illac is involved in a number of initiatives that present innovative solutions to enhance the lives of underserved communities and change society for the better.

"I have always believed in giving back to society. Having been blessed with a good life, I realized that I ought to use my talents to help better the lives of others," said Illac.

Through all of his initiatives, Illac said that technology has contributed a lot to his success as a social entrepreneur. With the myriad things he does - having to shuttle back and forth from different locations to oversee his projects, managing and storing the various information and data he acquires, and keeping connected with his staff and volunteers - Illac has leaned on technology to keep him afloat despite his hectic schedule.

"It's amazing how technology has enabled me to reach out to more people and advocate my cause. I could not have survived without my Windows laptop which contains all the information I need such as my presentations, the photos I took, and all the data I gathered for my projects. I rely on the Internet Explorer to keep me connected to my staff, my family and friends, and to keep me informed about current issues in the country," said Illac.

Microsoft believes in empowering people through technology by providing the right tools that will enable them to realize their full potential and become more productive individuals. "Illac is the perfect role model of a good citizen who has successfully channeled his passion into action to help enhance other people's way of living. We are very happy that Microsoft technology has become instrumental to him in making a difference. He is reaping the benefits of maximizing the use of technology, along with the many others whom he has helped," shared Chay Saputil, Product Manager for Windows, Microsoft Philippines.

With awards of distinction up on his sleeve such as the 2005 Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Award for social entrepreneurship and The Outstanding Young Persons of the World award this year from the Jaycees International (JCI), the former model/actor is concentrating on implementing projects that effect social change. Among his more popular endeavors are MyShelter Foundation and Pier One Seafarer's Dormitory.

MyShelter Foundation builds low-cost classrooms using the Earthbag System. The said system is a method of construction that uses lots of soil, straw sacks, and barbed wire as its components. The dome shaped structures are said to last for 50 years. From building houses, Illac will be undertaking his Millennium Schools project, wherein the earthbag construction system will be applied to the building of 20 schoolhouses in rural areas. "We have high hopes that our low-cost construction system would address the housing and school building shortage in the country," said Illac who is the executive director of MyShelter Foundation.

In 2000, fueled by his passion for improving people's lives, Illac founded Pier One Seafarer's Dorm, a temporary housing facility for seafarers, which charges only P100 per stay. Job-matching programs, seminars and temporary jobs are offered to the seafarers staying at the dorm. "I make use of the Internet and my network of contacts both here and outside the country to explore the opportunities available for the people who ask for my help in seeking for jobs. And this is what I do as a social entrepreneur, I help people help themselves."

Initially with just 40 bedrooms, Pier One has now expanded to three branches with over 1,500 beds. Having helped over 40,000 seafarers, Pier One has grown to be the largest migrant shelter of its kind in the country today.

Aside from these, Illac also has a passion for creating unconventional tools, which could empower people to become more productive. He has been actively promoting the use of cheap automated peanut peelers among farmers, which will save them the manual peanut shelling time and energy.

"My goal as a social entrepreneur is to enact positive changes in people's lives and Microsoft technology has helped me do that even better. The good thing about using technology in my line of work is that its benefits go beyond me, the user. It extends to the vast network of people whose lives I would want to change for the better," he said.

With all his accomplishments and contributions to uplifting the lives of the people and encouraging wide-scale social change, Illac has all the traits that would make him an "everyday hero".

Channeling his passion into action: Diaz with the seafarers at Pier One

Techno-savvy Chef looks forward to next generation products

Other than the usual grind of mixing, garnishing and plating, today's chefs have their share of typing, creating presentations, and reconciling inventories as part of their profession. This is especially true for Christine Zarandin, Executive Chef of Mezze in Greenbelt 2.

At 32, Christine is a successful young professional in the field of culinary arts whose talent has been recognized both here and abroad. In 2003, she was chosen as the Junior Chef of the year by the American Culinary Federation's Fraternity of Executive Chefs in Las Vegas. This young achiever has been using technology in her day-to-day activities and attributes a part of her success to it.

Christine has mastered the art of delivering the small plate dining specialties at Mezze and managing all the needed deliverables she needs at work. With a laptop as part of her tools, she has proven that those involved in culinary arts, chefs in particular, can be techno-savvy in their workplace, too.

"Most people would think that technology isn't relevant to my being a chef, but since I've realized that there is so much possibility in using technology, I have managed to integrate it into my work ever since. I am constantly seeking for innovation that will make me perform better in my profession" shared Christine.

Technology has enabled Christine to get rid of the tedious manual paperwork, as she uses applications such as Microsoft Office Word to create different documents; PowerPoint for presenting menus to prospective clients interested in holding their functions at Mezze, and tracking and managing all inventories of stocks and financial reports through Excel.

"Microsoft believes in empowering people through technology by providing them with the right tools that will enable them to realize their full potential, and become more productive individuals in whatever field they are in. It's great to see that someone like Christine - who doesn't operate in a traditional workplace - realizes the power of technology and uses it to her advantage. People like Christine are the reasons why Microsoft continues to innovate," enthused Chay Saputil, Windows Product Manager, Microsoft Philippines.

In terms of connectivity, communication, and access to information, the information that is readily available through Internet Explorer helps Christine to be "in the know" about the latest trends and new techniques in the culinary profession. "Looking up new menus is very easy," she enthused. E-mail and instant messaging are particularly useful for Christine's hectic schedule. "I see to it that I check my Hotmail account every time I have the chance. I get to send an e-mail or an instant message to my family, friends, and peers in the industry without taking up too much of my time," said Christine.

Having seen how technology has worked for their executive chef, Christine's colleagues have also integrated technology in their own preparation and planning. "We actually don't understand anything other than Microsoft Windows and Office that's why the computers that we have at Mezze run on the Microsoft operating system," said Christine.

True to being a techno-savvy individual, this young and dynamic Mezze chef is looking forward to the upgrades to Microsoft's flagship products and is betting on the big possibilities and opportunities these will bring.

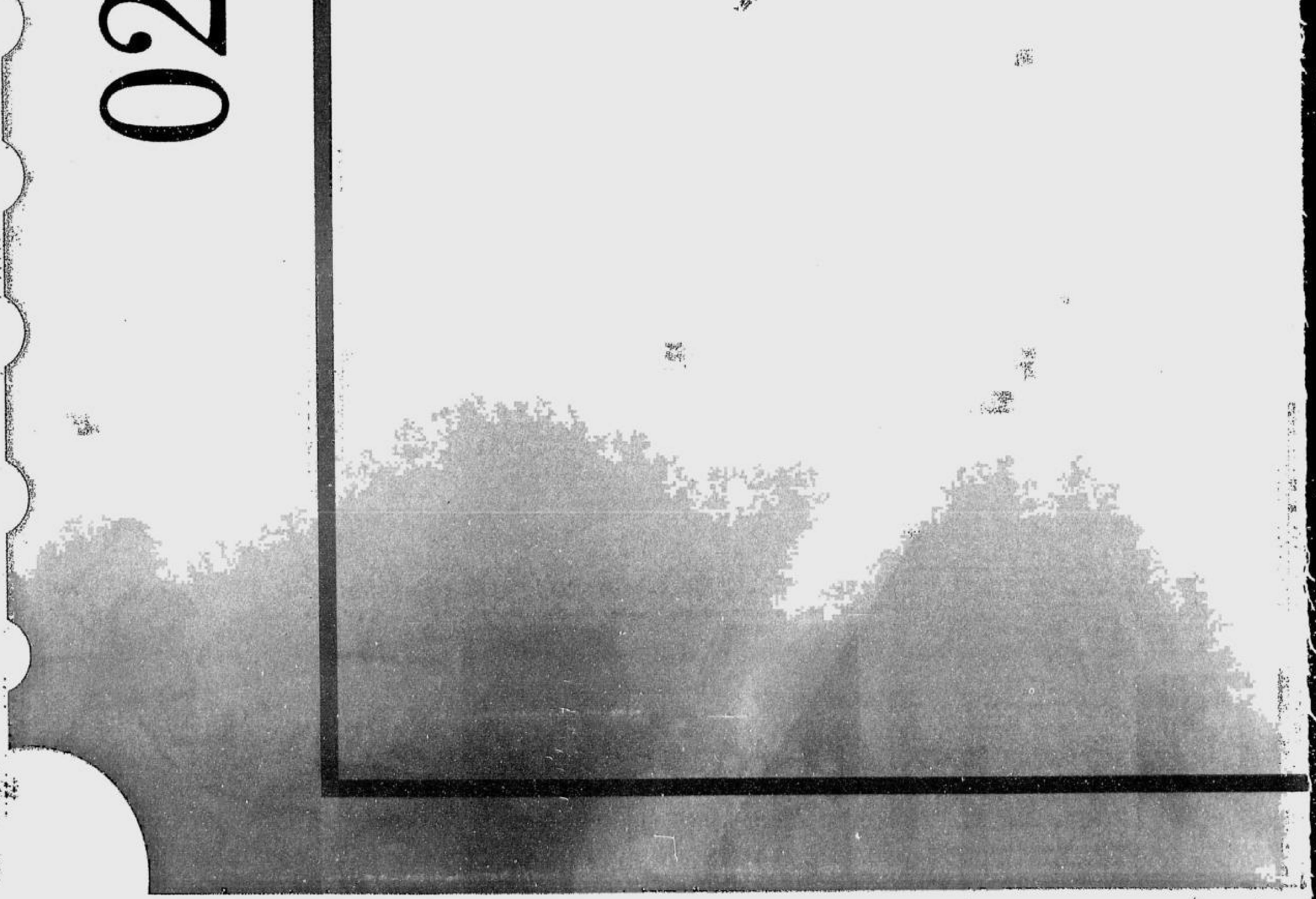
"Technology has certainly made life in the kitchen a lot easier. It's great to know that the technology we have now is built to cater to the varying needs of the people, making it more accessible and easier to use, I can't wait to see what the next generation products will offer," added Christine.

The new Windows Vista and the 2007 Microsoft Office System, which will be launched to the Filipino consumers on Feb. 3, will deliver superior communication and mobility capabilities. It will allow users to create documents, access information and files and connect to their peers whenever and wherever they want to.

Zarandin integrates technology in the kitchen

02•03•07

Micro
Biggest



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Admission is FREE.

On February 3, come to SM Mall of Asia in blue or green for a chance to win fabulous prizes. Visit our booths to experience Windows Vista and 2007 Microsoft Office System. That night, Microsoft will unveil Windows Vista. Celebrate with Windows Vista's hottest bands at the Music Hall, and enjoy a fantastic fireworks display show.

PICK A PRIZE

Register at the Microsoft booth at the Main Atrium and get your Passion passport. Take your passions to a new level at the Music, Gadgets, Work and Family booths. Have your passport stamped at each booth to join "Pick a Prize."

02•03•07

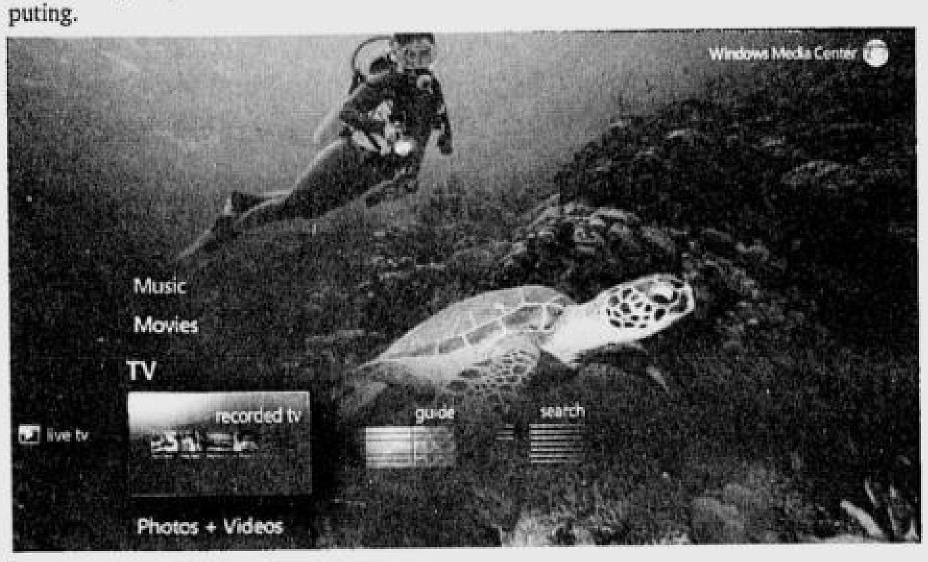
soft's Launch

Microsoft to Launch Next-generation Technology

Windows Vista and Office 2007 to be made available to consumers on February 3, 2007

Imagine a process of development that involved the feedback from millions of Windows users worldwide. Windows Vista is truly designed to empower organizations and, most especially, individuals to maximize their potential, optimize results and live out their passions - be it in family, work, gadgets, or music.

Following the success of Windows XP, Microsoft Philippines is launching the much-anticipated Windows Vista, its next-generation operating system that promises to deliver breakthrough experiences in the field of computing.



Imagine a product single-handedly enhancing Family, Work, Gadgets and Music Passions.

Windows Vista promises to enrich the user interface feeling starting with a very sleek, refreshing look evident throughout the entire computing experience, from the Windows Photo Gallery all the way to the innovative Windows Media Center. Imagine the experience of keeping and sharing digital memories being equally enjoyable as the activities themselves with intuitive controls. Designed in anticipation of what is available on the Internet nowadays, parents are empowered to monitor and manage their children's activities online, ensuring their safety when using the PC with Windows Vista.

With thousands of different file formats available, imagine a single operating system that ensures clarity and ease when working across different files. With Windows Vista, these features will amplify the information worker's output by making document searching faster and easier, leading to the user becoming more productive and efficient in his work.

The advent of consumer-centric technology has led to the proliferation of different gadgets designed for everyday use. Imagine Windows Vista as that single tool designed to be highly interoperable with gadgets like mobile phones, mobile music players, video cameras and digital cameras when it comes to uploading, filing, sharing, editing and printing. With Windows Vista, storing your files from different devices will simply be simpler.

For music lovers who cannot imagine life without music, enthusiasts will definitely enjoy their passion whether on the go or at home via Windows Vista's Windows Media Player and Windows Media Center, both of which will bring a more enjoyable and refreshing music experience.

More than contributing to productivity, Windows Vista is also an important tool in empowering people's lives and enriching individual experiences. Potential exists in all of us. Imagine a single product that would unleash this potential and empower every individual to become more productive.

Marking the launch of Windows Vista in the Philippines, Microsoft embarks on an advocacy campaign titled "Stars for Empowerment". The program involves celebrities and media partners tasked to identify different beneficiaries to whom they can donate a PC powered with the new Windows Vista.

Microsoft's mission in the Philippines is to enable people to maximize their full potential through technology. Microsoft believes that equipping people with the right software and tools will give them the capacity to explore BIG possibilities and live out their passions. Imagine having a world's worth of information at your fingertips, the power to enhance the experience of your passions while remaining constantly connected to your clients, colleagues, family and friends, whenever, wherever.

Signaling the start of a "new day", the day when Windows Vista becomes available in the Philippines, February 3 will see the Windows Vista Caravan. Imagine over a hundred bikers from the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) traversing Ayala Avenue, EDSA, Ortigas, and finishing at the SM Mall of Asia where the official unveiling of Windows Vista will take place.

Windows Vista promises to enable people to fulfill their passions. This bike caravan, along with the TRAP bikers, represents how the new operating system from Microsoft can drive people to live out and reach whatever their passions are.

Whatever your passion is, whether sharing/keeping memories, watching TV and home videos, listening to music, communicating, playing games, researching or creating all types of documents, Windows Vista has features that will enable you to take your passions to a whole new level.

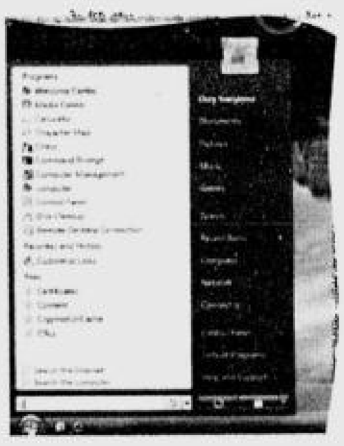
Imagine that.

Microsoft Offers a Peek at Windows Vista and Office 2007

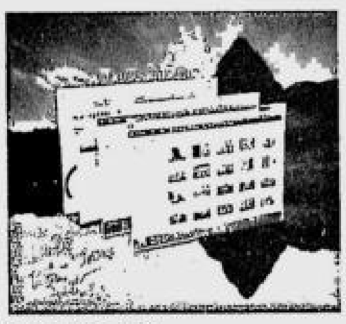
For the first time in 10 years, Microsoft is launching two of its flagship products together, the new Windows Vista and 2007 Microsoft Office System. Windows Vista is the highest-quality version of Windows that Microsoft has ever produced. It has advanced features that will ensure an enhanced computing experience in the areas of reliability, usability, and security. Windows Vista, together with the 2007 Microsoft Office System, promises to deliver an enriched computing experience. Vista and Office 2007 are slated to be launched in the Philippines on February 3, 2007 at the SM Mall of Asia. Here are some of the features that users can expect from the new products from Microsoft:

Windows Vista

The Vista start menu



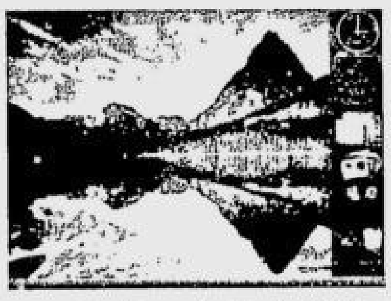
When you start using Windows Vista, you will recognize familiar elements such as the Start menu, which is now faster, more streamlined, and more helpful than in previous versions of Windows. The Start menu boasts of an integrated desktop search through a new feature called Instant Search which can help you find and launch almost anything on your PC. Just type in a word, a name, or a phrase, and Instant Search can find the right file for you. But more than that, the new start menu makes it very easy for you to navigate across all of the installed applications on your PC. Eliminating the slow performing, cascading "All Programs" view, the new start menu can help you get something started more quickly than ever.



The Flip 3D

With Flip 3D, you can use the scroll wheel on your mouse to flip through open windows in a stack, and quickly locate and select the one you want to work with.

The Sidebar

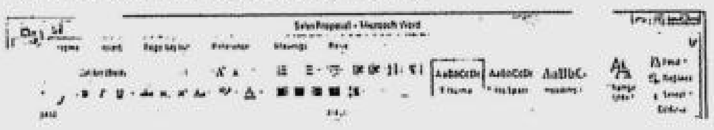


Windows Sidebar is a pane on the side of the Windows Vista desktop that organizes gadgets and makes them easy to access. Windows Sidebar is the perfect complement to widescreen monitors and also works seamlessly on standard displays. You can easily customize Windows Sidebar to suit how you want to interact with it-whether you want it always on top or resting below maximized windows. You can also move gadgets off the Windows Sidebar and place them anywhere on your desktop.

2007 Microsoft Office System

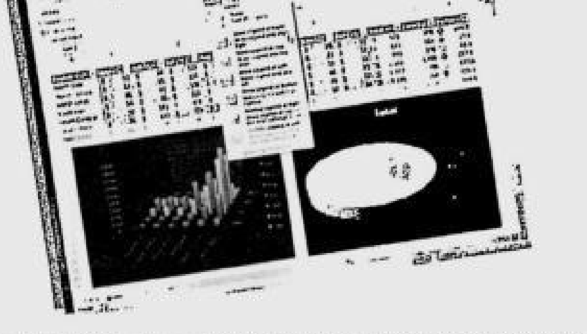
The Ribbon

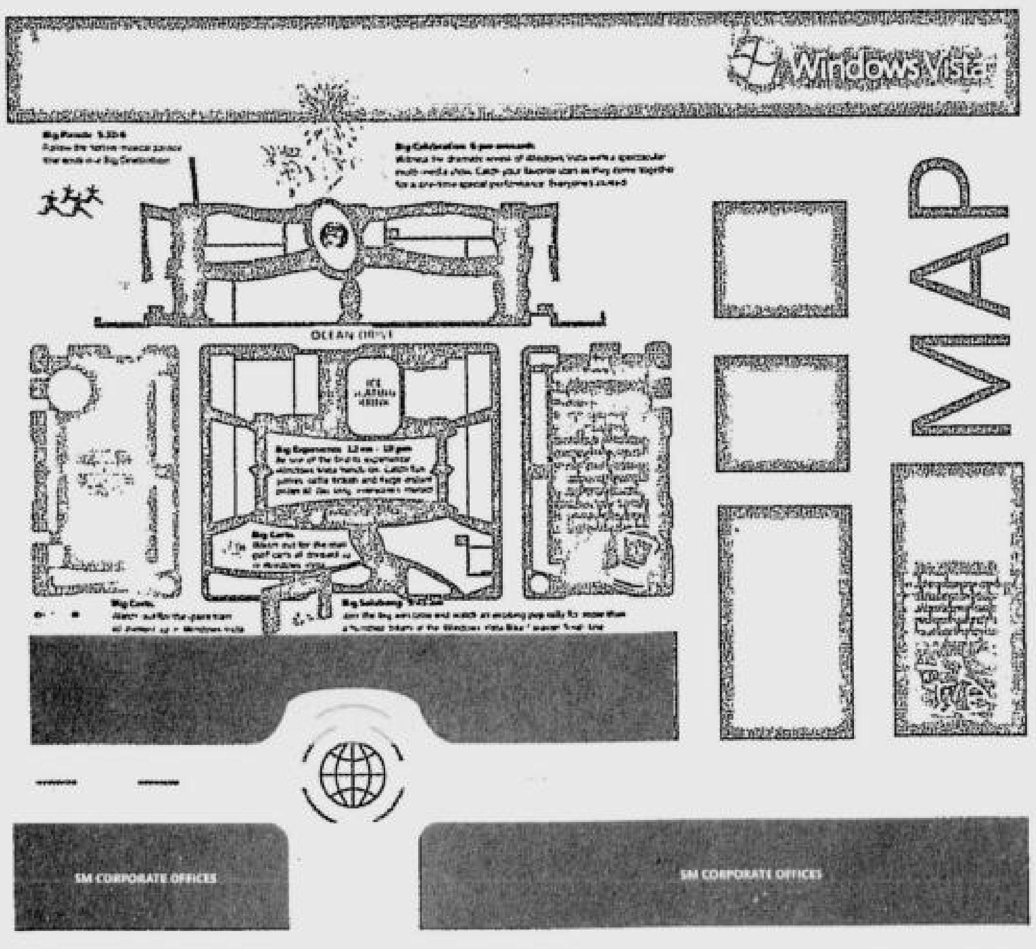
This primary replacement for menus and toolbars is a results-oriented user interface designed for easy browsing. The Ribbon consists of tabs displaying the commands that are most relevant for each of the task areas in each application. For example, in Microsoft Office Word 2007, the tabs group offers commands for activities such as inserting objects like pictures and tables, laying out pages, working with references, creating mailings, and reviewing documents. The Home tab provides instant access to many of the most frequently used features, making it easy for users to be productive with the new user interface right away.



Galleries

Galleries are at the heart of the redesigned experience. They provide users with a visual set of formatting options to choose from when working on a document, spreadsheet, presentation or Access™ database. By presenting a simple set of potential results that can be achieved with a single click, rather than a complex dialog box with numerous options, Galleries streamline the process of producing professional-looking work.





Calendar of Activities

February 3, 2007 (Saturday)

7:30 A.M. Windows Vista Bike Caravan Flag-off
From 6750 Building (Facing Ayala Ave.)
Route will cover EDSA, Ortigas Center,
Greenhills and end in SM Mall of Asia
By invitation only

9:45 A.M. Bike Caravan "Salubong" SM Mall of Asia

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 NN Press Conference
Main Atrium, SM Mall of Asia

10:00 A.M - 5:00 P.M. Windows Vista PC Sale
at VillMan, Silicon Valley and Complink

12:00 NN - 10:00 P.M. Windows Vista and 2007
Office System Product Experience
Stations Main Atrium, SM Mall of Asia
Pick-A-Prize activity and games await mall-goers!

2:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M. Boxed License promo
with free Canon Digital Camera at Villman, Silicon Valley, Complink,
Accent-Micro Products, Electroworld, Asianic

1:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. Raffle winners get-to enjoy their free Helicopter Ride

6:00 P.M. Festive Musical Parade

7:00 P.M. onwards Official Unveiling of Windows Vista and 2007
Microsoft Office System Music Hall, SM Mall of Asia
February 4, 2007 (Sunday)

10:00 A.M. - 10:00 P.M. Windows Vista
and 2007 Office System Product Experience Stations
Main Atrium, SM Mall of Asia Pick-A-Prize activity and games
await mall-goers!

Business Launch Platinum Partners
BAYANTEL
intel

Business Launch Gold Partners
NORTEL
ca

Consumer Launch Gold Partners
BAYANTEL
hp

Mobile Communication Launch Partners
Windows Mobile
Enjoy Mobility
O2
hp

Notebook Computer Launch Partners
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lenovo
acer Empowering People

Digital Display Launch Partner
SAMSUNG

Digital Imaging Launch Partner
Canon

Digital Storage Launch Partner
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VillMan
COMPlink
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ACCENT-MICRO PRODUCTS, INC.